HISTORY

OF

MODERN EUROPE:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL OF

THE ROMAN EMPIRE;

AND A VIEW OF THE

PROGRESS OF SOCIETY,

FROM THE

RISE OF THE MODERN KINGDOMS

TO THE

PEACE OF PARIS IN 1763.

IN A SERIES OF

LETTERS FROM A NOBLEMAN TO HIS SON.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH

A CONTINUATION,

EXTENDING TO THE TREATY OF AMIENS, IN 1802.

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1810.

TO

HIS GRACE

FRANCIS, DUKE OF BEDFORD,

THIS

IMPROVED EDITION

OF THE

HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS GRACE'S

MOST HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

WILLIAM RUSSELL.

Gray's Inn,
May 29, 1786.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A PERSUASION of the utility of a concise History of Modern Europe induced the Author to undertake this Work: and he has had the satisfaction to find his opinion justified by that of the public. The epistolary form was chosen as best calculated, in tracing the concatenation of events, for uniting the accuracy of the chronologer with the entertainment of the memorialist: And the character of a nobleman and a father was assumed, in order to give greater weight to the moral and political maxims, and to entitle the writer to offer, without seeming to dictate to the world, such Reflections on Life and Manners as are supposed more immediately to belong to the higher orders of society.

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To each volume of this Edition is prefixed a Chronological Table of Contents; and, to facilitate reference, an Index is subjoined to the Work.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

MODERN EUROPE.

PART I.

FROM THE RISE OF THE MODERN KINGDOMS TO THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA, IN 1648.

LETTER I.

Of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and the Settlement of the Barbarians.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, finished your course of Ancient History, under your preceptor: in the elements of Modern History I myself will undertake to instruct you. The establishment of the present European nations; the origin of our laws, manners, and customs; the progress of society, of arts, and of letters; demand your particular attention, and were ill committed to the disquisitions of a mere scholar.

Europe is the theatre on which the human character has appeared to the greatest advantage, and where society has attained its most perfect form, both in ancient and modern times. Its history will therefore furnish us with every thing worthy of observation in the study of men or of kingdoms. I shall, however, direct your eye occasionally to the

other parts of the globe, that you may have a general idea of the state of the universe. But, before I proceed to the history of Modern Europe, it will be proper to say a few words concerning its ancient inhabitants, and its situation at the settlement of the present nations.

The inhabitants of ancient Europe may be divided into three classes, Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians; under which last term we usually comprehend all those nations to whom the two former were pleased to apply it, because they had made less progress in the arts of civilization. With the Greek and Roman story you are well acquainted. I shall, therefore, only remind you, that the Greeks, the most polished people of antiquity, inhabited the maritime parts of the country now known by the name of European Turkey; that, when corrupted, they were subdued by the Romans; and that the conquerors then turned their arms against the Gauls, Germans, and other barbarians, whom they in a great measure reduced to subjection, by their superiority in the art of war, but not with the same facility with which they had overcome the voluptuous nations of Asia. A single battle did not decide the fate of a kingdom. Those brave and independent people, though often defeated, resumed their arms with fresh valour, and defended with obstinate courage their possessions and their liberties. But, after a variety of struggles, in which many of them perished in the field, and many were carried into slavery, a miserable remnant submitted to the Romans; while others fled to their mountains for freedom, or took refuge in the inaccessible corners of the North. There, defended by lakes and rivers, the indignant barbarians lived, until time had ripened among their enemies the seeds of destruction. Then, rushing forth, like an impetuous flood, and sweeping every thing before them, they took vengeance on the murderers of mankind;
A.D. 476. overturned the vast fabric of the Roman empire, the work and the wonder of ages; established on its

ruins new governments and new manners; and accomplished the most signal revolution in the history of nations[1].

Here we must pause, that we may consider the moral and political causes of this great event, and its influence on the state of society.

As soon as the Romans had subdued a particular territory, they prepared to civilise it. They transferred into each of the conquered countries their laws, manners, arts, sciences, and literature. And some have thought these a sufficient compensation for the loss of liberty and independence. But you, my dear Philip, will judge very differently, I hope, whatever veneration you may have for the Roman name.

Good laws are essential to good government, arts and sciences to the prosperity of a nation, and learning and politeness to the perfection of the human character. But these, in order to exalt a people, must be the result of the natural progress of civilisation, not of any adventitious ferment or external violence. The fruits of summer are ripened in winter by art; but the course of the seasons is necessary to give them their proper flavour, their regular size, and their natural taste. The spontaneous produce of the forest, though somewhat harsh, is preferable to what is raised by such forced culture: and the native dignity, the unsophisticated manners, and rude virtues of the barbarian, are superior to all that can be taught to the slave. When mankind are obliged to look up to a master for honour and consequence, to flatter his foibles, and to fear his frown, cunning takes place of wisdom, and treachery of fortitude; the mind loses its vigour, the heart its generosity; and man, in being polished, is only debased.

1 It was long fashionable with modern writers, especially those of a classical turn, to rail against their rude ancestors, and lament the fall of the Roman empire as a great misfortune to the human race. This mistake seems to have arisen from an admiration of ancient literature, and an imperfect knowledge of history; from not sufficiently distinguishing between the extinction of Roman liberty, and the destruction of Roman despotism.

This truth was never, perhaps, more strikingly exemplified than in the history of the Roman empire. The degrading influence of its dominion, more than any other circumstance, hastened its dissolution; for, although the conquered nations were by such means more easily kept in subjection, they became unable to resist a foreign enemy, and might be considered as decayed members of the body politic, which increased its size without increasing its strength. An appearance of prosperity, indeed, succeeded to the havoc of war; the ruined cities were rebuilt, and new ones founded; population flourished; civilisation advanced; the arts were cultivated: but the martial and independent spirit of the people of the northern provinces was so totally extinct in a few centuries, that, instead of preferring death to slavery, like so many of their illustrious ancestors, they patiently submitted to any contribution which a rapacious governor was pleased to levy; and the descendants of those gallant warriors who had disputed the field with the Roman legions under Cæsar and Germanicus, were unable to oppose the desultory inroads of a troop of undisciplined barbarians. They were almost incapable of either thinking or acting for themselves. Hence all the countries, which had been subjected to the Roman yoke, fell a prey to the first invader, after the retreat of the imperial forces.

Many other causes contributed to the dissolution of the Roman empire, beside the debility occasioned by its unwieldy corpulence.

Rome owed her dominion as much to the manners as to the arms of her citizens[2]. Their dignity of sentiment, their love of liberty and of their country, their passion for

2 "Think not," said the younger Cato to the Roman senate, "it was merely by "force of arms that our forefathers raised this republic from a low condition to its "present greatness;—no! but by things of a very different nature——industry and "discipline at home, moderation and justice abroad, a disinterested spirit in coun-"cil, unblinded by passion, and unbiassed by pleasure." Sallust. *Bell. Catilin.*

glory, their perseverance in toils, their contempt of danger and of death, their obedience to the laws, and, above all, their civil constitution and military discipline, had extended and cemented the conquests of the Romans. The very usurpations of that sovereign people (for I speak of the times of the republic) were covered with a certain majesty, which rendered even tyranny respectable. But their government carried in its bosom the seeds of destruction. The continual jealousy between the patricians and plebeians, the senate and the people, without any balancing power, made the ruin of the republic inevitable, as soon as the manners were relaxed: and a relaxation of manners was necessarily produced by the pillage of Greece and the conquest of Asia[3], by the contagious refinements of the one, and the influx of wealth from the other.

The fall of Carthage, and the expulsion of the Gauls from Italy, though seemingly the two most fortunate events in the Roman history, contributed also to a change of manners, and to the extinction of Roman liberty. While Carthage subsisted, the attention of all parties was carried toward that rival state; to defend themselves, or annoy their enemies, was the only care of the Romans; and as long as the Gauls had possessions in the neighbourhood of Rome, her citizens were united by the sense of common danger; but no sooner were their fears from abroad removed, than the people began to be altogether ungovernable. Ambitious men took advantage of their licentiousness; party clashed with party. A master became necessary, in order to terminate the horrors of civil war, as well as to give union and vigour to the state. Interest and vanity made courtiers; force or fear, slaves. The

3 It was in the delicious climate and pleasurable groves of Asia (says Sallust) that the Roman soldiers first learned to abandon themselves to wine and women—to admire pictures, statues, and vases of curious workmanship—and to spare nothing civil or sacred in the prosecution of their rapacious aims. *Bell. Catilin.*

people were disarmed by the jealousy of despotism, and corrupted by the example of an abandoned court. Effeminacy, debauchery, profligacy, and every atrocious vice, were common upon the throne.

A new source of ruin disclosed itself. Some disputed successions having convinced the troops that the sovereignty was in their hands, they henceforth sold it to the highest bidder. Sporting with the lives of their princes, as formerly with the laws of the republic, they created emperors only to extort money from them, and afterwards massacred them, in order to extort like sums from their successors. Emperors were opposed to emperors, and armies disputed the pretensions of armies. With obedience discipline was lost. Wise princes endeavoured, but in vain, to restore it: their zeal to maintain the ancient military regulations only exposed them to the fury of the soldiery; the very name of discipline was a signal for revolt. The armies of Rome did not now consist of freemen who had voluntarily chosen a military life, or who, in obedience to the laws, served for a term of years; but of mercenaries collected from the provinces, or barbarians bribed into the service, as more able to undergo the fatigues of war. Her soldiers were no longer citizens armed in defence of their country: they were its oppressors; they were licensed robbers, insatiably eager for pillage.

To prevent the continual treasons of the soldiery, particularly of the prætorian bands, the emperors associated with themselves, in the supreme power, their sons, their brothers, or such persons as they could trust; and every emperor elected a Cæsar, or successor. They likewise subdivided, and consequently diminished, the power of the prætorian præfects, who were the grand-vizirs of their time, appointing four instead of two. By these means the imperial seat was rendered more secure; the emperors were permitted to die in their beds; manners were soften-

ed, and less blood was shed by ferocity; but the state was wasted by an enormous expense, and a new species of oppression took place, no less disgraceful to humanity than the former massacres. The tyranny was transferred from the soldiery to the prince; the cause and the mode were changed, but the effect was the same. Shut up within the walls of a palace, surrounded by flatterers and women, and sunk in the softness of Eastern luxury, those masters of empire governed in secret by the dark and subtle artifices of despotism. Iniquitous judgements, under the form of justice, seemed only to set death at a distance, in order to make life more miserable, and existence more precarious. Nothing was said, all was insinuated; every man of high reputation was accused; and the warrior and the politician daily saw themselves at the mercy of sycophants, who had neither ability to serve the state themselves, nor generosity to suffer others to serve it with honour[4].

The removal of the imperial court to Constantinople, to say nothing of the subsequent division of the empire into Eastern and Western, was a new blow to the grandeur of Rome, and likewise to its security: for the veteran legions, that guarded the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, were also removed to the East, in order to guard another frontier; and Italy, robbed of its wealth and inhabitants, sunk into a state of the most annihilating languor. Changed into a garden by an Asiatic pomp, and crowded with villas, now deserted by their voluptuous owners, this once fertile country was unable to maintain itself; and, when the crops of Sicily and Africa failed, the people breathed nothing but sedition.

The discontents occasioned by the removal of the imperial court, were heightened by those of religion. Chris-

4 See Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains, et de leur Décadence*, chap. xv. xvi. xvii., and the authors there cited, especially Tacitus, Ammianus, Marcellinus, and Zosimus.

tianity had long been making progress in the empire: it now ascended the throne of the Cæsars. As the Christians had formerly been persecuted, they, in their turn, became persecutors. The gods of Rome were publicly insulted, their statues were broken, their votaries were harassed. Penal statutes were enacted against the ancient worship: the punishment of death was denounced against the sacrifices formerly ordained by law: the altar of Victory was overturned, the cross was exalted in its stead, and displayed in place of that triumphant eagle under which the world had been conquered[5]. The most dreadful hates and animosities arose. The Pagans accused the Christians of all their misfortunes; they rejoiced in the midst of the greatest calamities, as if the gods had come in person to take vengeance on the destroyers of their altars; while the Christians affirmed, that the remains of Paganism alone had drawn down the wrath of Omnipotence. Both parties were more occupied about their religious disputes than the common safety; and to complete the miseries of the unhappy people, the Christians became divided among themselves. New sects sprang up; new disputes took place; new jealousies and antipathies raged; and the same punishments were denounced against Heretics and Pagans. An universal bigotry debased the minds of men. In a grand assembly of the provinces, it was proposed, that, as there were three persons in the Trinity, there should be three emperors. Sieges were raised, and cities lost, for the sake of a piece of rotten wood, or withered bone, supposed to have belonged to

5 Four respectable deputations were successively voted to the imperial court, representing the grievances of the priesthood and the senate, and soliciting the restoration of the altar of Victory. The conduct of this important business was entrusted to Symmachus, a noble and eloquent orator, who thus makes Rome herself plead before the imperial tribunal, in favour of the ancient worship: "These rites have "repelled Hannibal from the city, and the Gauls from the Capitol. Were my grey "hairs reserved for such intolerable disgrace? I am ignorant of the new system "that I am required to adopt; but I am well assured, that the correction of old "age is always an ungrateful and invidious office." Symmach. lib. x. epist. 54.

some saint or martyr. The effeminacy of the age mingled itself with this infatuation; and generals, more weak than humane, sat down to mourn the calamities of war, when they should intrepidly have led on their troops to battle[6].

The character of the people with whom the Romans had to contend, was the reverse of their own. Those Barbarians, as they were called, breathed nothing but war. Their martial spirit was yet in its vigour. They sought a milder climate, and lands more fertile than their forests and mountains: the sword was their right; and they exercised it without remorse, as the right of nature. Barbarous they surely were, but they were superior to the people whom they attacked, in virtue as well as in valour. Simple and severe in their manners, they were unacquainted with the name of luxury; any thing was sufficient for their extreme frugality. Hardened by exercise and toil, their bodies seemed inaccessible to disease or pain: they sported with danger, and met death with expressions of joy. They were, at the same time, remarkable for their regard to the sanctity of the marriage bed, their generous hospitality, their detestation of treachery and falsehood. They possessed many maxims of civil wisdom, and wanted only the culture of reason to conduct them to the true principles of social life[7].

What could the divided, effeminate, and now dastardly Romans, oppose to such a people? Nothing but fear and folly; or, what was still more ignominious, treachery. Soon convinced that the combat was unequal, they attempted to appease the invaders by money: but that peace could not be of long continuance which put those

6 Montesq. *Considérat.* &c. chap. xviii—xxii. See also Gibbon's *Hist. of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. iii.—vi., and the authors there quoted.

7 Tacit. *de Moribus Germ.*—Jornand. *de Reb. Get.*—"As in polished societies," says Ammianus Marcellinus, speaking of the Huns, "ease and tranquillity are "courted, they delight in war and dangers. He who falls in battle is reckoned happy; "while they who die of old age or disease are deemed infamous." *Hist.* lib. xxxi.

who sold it in a better condition to sell another. Force is seldom just. These voluntary contributions were changed into a tribute, which was demanded as a right; and war was denounced when it was refused, or fell short of the customary sum. Tributes were multiplied upon tributes, till the empire was drained of its treasure. Another expedient was then adopted: large bodies of the Barbarians were taken into pay, and opposed to other Barbarians. This mode of defence, so contrary to the practice of the first Romans, answered for the moment, but terminated in ruin: those auxiliaries proved the most dangerous enemies to the empire. Already acquainted with the luxuries, the wealth, and the weakness of the Romans, they turned their arms against their masters, inviting their countrymen to come and share with them in the spoils of a people unworthy of so many accommodations. They had likewise become acquainted with what little military skill yet remained among the Romans; and that, superadded to their natural intrepidity, rendered them irresistible. A third expedient, yet more unworthy of the Roman name, was practised:—assassination was employed by the emperors against those princes or leaders whose arms they feared; it was even concealed beneath the mask of friendship, and perpetrated under the roof of hospitality—in the convivial hour, and at the festive board[8]!

This diabolical practice, the want of faith, and other unmanly vices of the Romans, not only account for the subversion of their empire, but also for many of the cruelties of the conquerors. Inflamed with the passion of revenge, no less than with the thirst of conquest and the lust of plunder, the inflexible and high-spirited, though naturally generous, Barbarians, were equally deaf to the offers of treaty and the voice of supplication. Where-ever they marched, their route was marked with blood. The most

8 Montesquieu and Gibbon, ubi sup.

fertile and populous provinces were converted into deserts. Italy was often pillaged; and the metropolis itself did not escape the licentiousness of barbarous outrage. New invaders, from regions more remote and barbarous, drove out or exterminated the former colonists; and Europe was successively ravaged, till the countries which had poured forth their myriads were drained of people, and the sword of slaughter was tired of destroying.

The overwhelming progress of the Barbarians soon diffused its powerful effects over Europe. In the course of the fifth century, the Visigoths took possession of Spain; the Franks, of Gaul; the Saxons, of the Roman provinces in South-Britain; the Huns, of Pannonia; the Ostrogoths, of Italy and the adjacent provinces. New governments, laws, languages; new manners, customs, dresses; new names of men and of countries, prevailed; and an almost total change took place in the state of Europe[9].

How far this change ought to be lamented is not now a point of great dispute. The human species was reduced to such a degree of debasement by the pressure of Roman despotism, that we cannot be displeased at any means, however violent, which removed or lightened the load. But we cannot help lamenting at the same time, that this revolution was the work of nations so little enlightened by science or polished by civilisation; for the Roman laws, though corrupted, were in general the best that human wisdom had framed; and the Roman arts and literature, though they had greatly declined, were still superior to any thing found among rude nations, or which those who spurned them produced for many ages.

9 A similar change was soon to occur in the state of Asia, a considerable part of which was still subject to the emperors of Constantinople. These princes, though gradually robbed of their Asiatic provinces by the followers of Mohammed, continued to preserve in the East (as we shall have occasion to see) an image of Roman greatness, long after Rome had been sacked by the Barbarians, and the Roman dominion finally extinguished in the West. The Roman provinces in Africa were already overrun by the Vandals, who had spread desolation with fire and sword.

The contempt of the Barbarians for the Roman improvements must not, however, be ascribed wholly to their ignorance, nor the suddenness of the revolution to their desolating fury; the manners of the conquered must come in for a share. Had the Romans not been in the lowest state of national degeneracy, they might surely have civilised their conquerors; had they retained any of the virtues of men among them, they might have continued under the government of their own laws. Many of the Gothic leaders were endowed with great abilities, and some were acquainted both with the policy and literature of the Romans; but they were justly afraid of the contagious influence of Roman example; and therefore avoided every thing allied to that name, whether hurtful or beneficial[10]. They erected a cottage in the neighbourhood of a palace, breaking down the stately building, and burying in its ruins the finest works of human ingenuity: they ate out of vessels of wood, and made the vanquished be served in vessels of silver; they hunted the boar on the voluptuous parterre, the trim garden, and expensive pleasure-ground, where effeminacy was wont to saunter, or indolence to loll; and they pastured their herds where they might have raised a luxuriant harvest. They prohibited their children from acquiring a knowledge of literature, and of all the elegant arts; because they concluded, from the dastardly behaviour of the Romans, that learning tends to enervate the mind, and that he who has trembled under the rod of a pedagogue will never dare to meet a sword with an undaunted eye[11]. Upon the same principles they rejected the Roman jurisprudence. It reserved nothing to the vengeance of man: they therefore,

10 "When we would brand an enemy," says an enlightened barbarian, "with "disgraceful and contumelious appellations, we call him a *Roman*; a name which "comprehends whatever is base, cowardly, avaricious, luxurious—in a word, false "hood, and all other vices." Luitprand. *Legat.* ap. Murat. vol. ii.

11 Procop. *Bell. Goth.* lib. i.

not unphilosophically, thought that it would rob him of his active powers. Nor could they conceive how the person injured could rest satisfied, but by pouring out his fury upon the author of the injustice. Hence arose all those judicial combats, and private wars, which for many ages desolated Europe.

In what manner light sprang from this darkness, order from this confusion, and taste from this barbarism, we shall have occasion to observe in the course of the history. We shall find that genius and magnificence displayed themselves in a new mode, which prevailed for a time, and was exploded; that the sons at length idolised that literature which their fathers had proscribed, and wept over the ruins of those sculptures, paintings, buildings, which they could not restore; digging from dunghills, and the dust of ages, the models of their future imitation, and enervating themselves with the same arts which had enervated the Romans.

In the mean time we must take a view of the system of policy and legislation established by the Barbarians.

LETTER II.

Of the System of Policy and Legislation established by the Barbarians in the Provinces of the Roman Empire.

THE ancient Germans, Scandinavians, and other nations of Europe, had a certain degree of conformity in their government, manners, and opinions. The same leading character was also observable among the Goths and Vandals who dismembered the Roman empire. Alike distinguished by a love of war and of liberty, by a persuasion that force only constitutes right, and that victory

is an infallible proof of justice, they were equally bold in attacking their enemies, and in resisting the absolute domination of any one man. They were free, even in a state of submission. Their primitive government was a kind of military democracy, under a general or chieftain, who had commonly the title of King. Matters of little consequence were determined by the principal men; but the whole community assembled to deliberate on national objects. The authority of their kings or generals, who owed their eminence entirely to their military talents, and held it by no other claim, was extremely limited: it consisted rather in the privilege of advising, than in the power of commanding. Every individual was at liberty to choose whether he would engage in any warlike enterprise. They therefore followed the chieftain who led them forth in quest of new settlements, from inclination, not control[1], as volunteers who offered to accompany him, not as soldiers whom he could order to march; and they considered their conquests as common property, in which all had a right to share, as all had contributed to procure them; nor was any obligation whatever entailed on the possessors of lands thus acquired. Every one was the lord of his own little territory.

Some new arrangements, however, became expedient when these conquerors had settled in the Roman provinces, where their acquisitions were to be maintained not only against the ancient inhabitants, but also against the inroads of new invaders. They then saw the necessity of forming a closer union, and of relinquishing some of their private rights for public safety. They continued, therefore, to acknowledge the general who had led them to victory: he was considered as the head of the colony; he had the largest portion of the conquered lands; while every warrior, on receiving a share according to his mili-

1 Tacit. *de Moribus German.* cap. xi.—xlvi.——Amm. Marcel. lib. xxxi——Pris. *Rhet.* ap. Byz. Script. vol. i.

tary rank, tacitly bound himself to appear against the enemies of the community[2].

This new division of property, and the obligations consequent upon it, gave rise to a species of government distinguished by the name of the FEUDAL SYSTEM. The idea of a feudal kingdom was borrowed from that of a military establishment. The victorious army, cantoned out in the country which it had seised, continued arranged under its proper officers, who were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to assemble whenever occasion should require their united operations or counsels.

But this system of policy, apparently so well calculated for national defence or conquest, did not sufficiently provide for the interior order and tranquillity of the state. The bond of political union was feeble; the sources of dissension were many; and corruption was interwoven with the very frame of the constitution. The new partition of the conquered lands, which were chiefly swallowed up by the great officers, gave the few a dangerous ascendency over the many. The king or general, by his superior allotment, had it amply in his power to reward past services, or attach new followers for the purpose of future wars. With this view he parceled out his lands, binding those, on whom he bestowed them, to attend him in all his military enterprises, under the penalty of forfeiture. The nobles, or great officers, followed his example, annexing the same conditions to their benefices or grants of land, and appearing at the head of their numerous vassals, like so many independent princes, whenever their pride was wounded or their property injured. They disputed the claims of the sovereign; they withdrew their attendance, or turned their arms against him[3]. A strong barrier was thus formed against a general despotism in the state; but the nobles themselves, by means of their

2 Du Cange, *Gloss.* voca *Miles* et *Alodis*.
3 Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxx. xxxi.

warlike retainers, were the tyrants of every inferior district, holding the people in servitude, and preventing any regular administration of justice, every one claiming that prerogative within his own domain. Nor was this the only privilege usurped by those haughty chieftains: they also extorted from the crown the right of coining money in their own name, and of carrying on war against their private enemies[4].

In consequence of these encroachments on the royal prerogative, the powerful vassals of the crown obtained grants during life, and afterwards others including their heirs, of such lands as they had originally enjoyed only during pleasure; and they appropriated to themselves titles of honour, as well as offices of power and of trust, which became hereditary in many families. The ties which connected the principal members of the constitution with its head were dissolved; almost all ideas of political subjection were lost, and little appearance of feudal subordination remained. The nobility openly aspired at independence; they scorned to consider themselves as subjects; and a kingdom, considerable in name and extent, was often a mere shadow of monarchy, and really consisted of as many separate principalities as it contained baronies. A variety of feuds and jealousies subsisted among the barons, and gave rise to very frequent wars. Hence every country in Europe, wasted or kept in continual alarm by these internal hostilities, was filled with castles and places of strength, in order to protect the inhabitants from the fury of their fellow-subjects.

Kingdoms so divided, and torn by domestic broils, were little capable of any foreign effort. The wars of Europe, therefore, during several centuries, as we shall have occasion to see, resembled more the wild and desultory incursions of pirates, or banditti, than the regular

4 Montesquieu, ubi supra.—Robertson's Introd. *Hist. Charles* V.—Hume's *Hist. Eng.* Append. ii.

and concerted operations of national force. Happily, however, for posterity, the state of every kingdom was nearly the same; otherwise all must have fallen a prey to one; the independent spirit of the North might have been extinguished for ever: and the present harmonious system of European policy, which so gloriously struggled from the chaos of anarchy, would have sunk in eternal night.

The particular manner in which the Barbarians conducted their judicial proceedings, when they first settled in the provinces of the Roman empire, cannot now be ascertained; but their form of government, their manners, and a variety of other circumstances, lead us to believe that it was nearly the same with that which prevailed in their original countries; where the authority of the magistrate was so limited, and the independence of individuals so great, that they seldom admitted any umpire but the sword[5].

Our most ancient historical records justify this opinion; they represent the exercise of justice in all the kingdoms of Europe, and the ideas of men with respect to equity, as little different from those which prevail in a state of nature, and deform the first stages of society in every country. Resentment was almost the sole motive for prosecuting crimes; and the gratification of that passion, more than any view to the prosperity and good order of society, was the end, and also the rule in punishing them. He that suffered the wrong was the only person who had a right to pursue the aggressor—to demand or remit the punishment: and he might accept a compensation for any offence, how heinous soever. The prosecution of criminals in the name and by the authority of the community, in order to deter others from violating the laws, now justly deemed the great object of legislation, was a maxim of jurisprudence then little understood in theory, and still less regarded in practice. The

5 Ferguson's *Essay on Civil Society*, part ii.

civil and criminal judges could, in most cases, do no more than appoint the lists, and leave the parties to decide their cause by the sword. Fierce and haughty nobles, unfriendly to the restraints of law, considered it as infamous to give up to another the right of determining what reparation they should accept, or with what vengeance they should rest satisfied: they scorned to appeal to any tribunal but their own right-arm. And if men of inferior condition sometimes submitted to award or arbitration, it was only to that of the leader whose courage they respected, and whom in the field they had been accustomed to obey[6]. Hence every chieftain became the judge of his tribe in peace, as well as its general in war.—Of the pernicious effects of this power upon governments and manners, and the absurd modes of trial established before its abolition, we shall have frequent occasion to take notice in the history of the modern kingdoms.

The feudal system, however, with all its imperfections, and the disorders to which it gave birth, was by no means so debasing to humanity as the uniform pressure of Roman despotism. Very different from that dead calm which accompanies peaceful slavery, and in which every faculty of the soul sinks into a kind of somnolency, it kept the minds of men in continual ferment, and their hearts in agitation. If animosities were keen, friendships also were warm. The commonalty were unfortunately degraded to the condition of slaves; but the nobility were exalted to the rank of princes. The gentry were their associates: and the king, without the form of compact, was in reality but chief magistrate, or head of the community, and could literally do no WRONG; or none, at least, with impunity.

6 This subject has been finely illustrated by Dr. Robertson (Introd. *Hist. Charles V.*), and by the president Montesquieu (*L'Esprit des Loix*, lib. xviii.—xxxi.), who has written a philosophical commentary on the *Laws of the Barbarians*. It has also been treated, with much learning and ingenuity, by Dr. Stuart in his *View of Society*, and by Mr. Gibbon in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xxxviii.

LETTER III.

Of the Rise of the French Monarchy, and its Progress under the Kings of the First Race.

IN history, as in all other sciences, it is necessary to affix certain limits to our inquiries, if we would proceed with certainty; and, where utility more than curiosity is our object, we must even contract these boundaries. We must not only confine ourselves to those periods where truth can be ascertained, but to those events chiefly which were followed by some civil or political consequence, which produced some alteration in the government or the manners of a people; and, even of such events, we should be more particularly attentive to those which continue to operate upon our present civil or political system.

In these few words, my dear son, to avoid egotism, I have indirectly given you an account of the manner in which I mean to conduct that *History of Modern Europe* which is intended for your instruction. The first epochs of modern, as well as ancient history, are involved in fable; and the transactions of the immediately succeeding periods are handed down to us in barren chronicles, which convey no idea of the characters of the agents, and consequently are destitute alike of instruction and amusement; while the events of later ages are related with a copiousness so profuse and undistinguishing, that a selection becomes absolutely necessary for such as are unwilling to employ a long course of years in acquiring a knowledge of past transactions. And, as I would rather have you acquainted with one living than with ten dead statesmen or heroes, I shall be as concise in my narration as is consistent with perspicuity, and as select in my matter as information will allow; yet always taking care to omit no anecdote which can throw light on the history of the hu-

man heart, nor any circumstance that marks the progress of civil society.

Modern History is of little importance before the time of Charle-magne: and a late celebrated writer has fixed upon the coronation of that prince at Rome, in the year 800, as the proper æra of its commencement. But for the sake of order, as well as to gratify the natural desire of becoming acquainted with the origin of nations, I shall give you a short sketch of the state of Modern Europe previous to that æra.

The French monarchy first claims our notice; not only on account of its antiquity, but because of its early and continued importance. The Roman power in Gaul had long been declining, when the Franks, a nation of Gothic descent, crossed the Rhine, with views of conquest and settlement. They are said to have founded a kingdom on the Gallic frontiers, under Pharamond: but of the acts of this prince we have no certain knowledge, and even his existence has been doubted. With regard to the reign of Clodion there is less doubt; and he appears to have extended his dominion to the banks of the Somme. Dying in the year 448, he was succeeded by Merovée, who had a share in the great victory obtained over Attila the Hun, on the plains of Châlons. Childeric, though a debauched prince, acquired new territories; and his son Clovis established that kingdom to which he gave the name of *France*, or the *Land of Free Men.*—How ill applied in later times!

Clovis, in early life, displayed both valour and prudence. His age did not exceed nineteen years when he crushed the efforts of Syagrius, his Roman competitor: and various circumstances conspired to his farther aggrandisement. The Gauls hated the dominion of the Romans, and were strongly attached to Christianity: Clovis gained on their piety, by favouring their bishops: and his marriage with Clotilda, a Christian princess, induced them to

hope that he would speedily embrace their religion. The attachment of his countrymen to their ancient worship was the sole objection: the pious exhortations of the queen had some effect; and the king, having vanquished the Allemanni at Tolbiac, near Cologne, after an obstinate engagement, politically ascribed that victory to the God of Clotilda, whom he said he had invoked at the time of the battle, under a promise of becoming a Christian, if his exertions should be crowned with success. He was accordingly baptised by St. Remigius, bishop of Rheims; and almost the whole French nation followed his example[1]. A.D. 496.

This was a grand circumstance in favour of Clovis; and he did not fail to take advantage of it. The Gauls were zealous Catholics; but the Arian creed was followed by the Visigoths, who occupied the country between the Loire and the Pyrenées, and also by the Burgundians, who had seised some of the eastern and southern provinces of the Gallic continent. Clotilda herself was a Catholic, though, being a Burgundian, she had been nursed in the bosom of Arianism; and Clovis overflowed with zeal for her faith, when he found that it would second his ambitious views. Under colour of religion, he made war upon Alaric, king of the Visigoths: the Gallic clergy favoured his pretensions; and the battle of Vouillé, in which that prince was vanquished and slain, added to the kingdom of France a considerable territory to the southward of the Loire[2]. A.D. 507.

But Clovis, instead of enjoying his good fortune with

1 *Gest. Franc.* cap. xv.—Greg. Turon. lib. ii. cap. 31. Of the miracles said to have been wrought on the conversion of Clovis, the author of this work says nothing, as he would not wish to foster pious credulity; but the lovers of the marvellous will find sufficient food for their passion in Hincmar *(Vit. St. Remig.)*. It may not, however, be improper to observe, that Clovis, when warmed with the eloquence of the bishop of Rheims, in describing the passion and death of Christ, started up, and, seising his spear, violently exclaimed, "Had I been there with my valiant Franks, I "would have redressed his wrongs!" Fredegarii *Epitom.* cap. xxi.

2 Greg. Tur. lib. ii. cap. 37.

dignity, disgraced the latter part of his reign by perfidies and cruelties toward the princes of his house, whom he extirpated. He died at the age of forty-five years, after endeavouring to atone for his crimes by building and endowing churches and monasteries, and assembling a council at Orleans for the regulation of church-discipline[3].

The death of Clovis was a severe blow to the grandeur of the French monarchy. He left four sons, who divided his extensive dominions among them. Thierry, the eldest, had the largest share; he was king of Austrasia, which not only comprehended the north-eastern part of France, but included the German conquests of Clovis: Metz was his capital. Clodomir was king of Orléans, Childebert of Paris, and Clotaire of Soissons. This division of the empire of the Franks, into four independent kingdoms, not only weakened its force, but gave rise to endless broils. The brothers became enemies whenever their interests jarred; and the most dreadful barbarities were the consequence of their dissensions.

Nov. 511.

The experience of these evils, however, did not prevent a similar division from taking place after the death of Clotaire, the sole successor of his brothers and nephews. His four sons divided the four kingdoms by lot[4]. That of Paris fell to Caribert; Soissons to Chilperic: Austrasia to Sigebert: and Orléans to Gontran, in whose lot was also included the Burgundian realm, which had been conquered by the united forces of Childebert and Clotaire. This new division was followed by consequences still more fatal than the former. Two queens, who might rather be called furies than women, sacrificed every thing to their bloody ambition—Brunechilda, or Brunehaud, princess of Spain, wife to Sigebert, and Fredegonda, first concubine and afterwards wife to Chilperic.

A.D. 561.

3 Id Auct. lib. ii. cap. 40—43.

4 Id. lib. iv. cap. 22.—*Gest. Franc.* cap. xxix.

Their mutual hatred, conjoined with their influence over their husbands, produced a series of crimes, equally ruinous to the royal family and the people.

After the murder of a multitude of princes, and many years of civil war, carried on with the most vindictive spirit, and accompanied with every form of treachery and cruelty, Clotaire II., son of Chilperic and Fredegonda, was left sole king of France[5]. He re-established tranquillity, and gained the hearts of his people by his justice and generosity; and he attached the nobles to him by augmenting their consequence. He committed the government of the provinces of Austrasia and Burgundy to the Mayors of the Palace, as they were called; a kind of viceroys, who, daily acquiring power, at last made their way to the throne. A. D. 613.

The vices of Dagobert, the son of Clotaire; the taxes with which he loaded the people, to furnish his debauches, or to atone for them, according to the custom of those times, by pious profusions, weakened the royal authority, at the same time that they debased it. His two sons, Sigebert II. and Clovis II., were only the founders of monasteries. They were ciphers in their kingdoms; the mayors were the actual sovereigns.

On the death of Sigebert, Grimoald, mayor of Austrasia, placed his own son upon the throne of that kingdom. The usurper was deposed; but the seducing example remained as a lure to future ambition. The succeeding princes were as weak as their predecessors; and Pepin d'Heristal, duke of Austrasia, governed France for twenty-eight years, under the title of mayor, with great prudence and fortitude. The kings were no more than decorated pageants, occasionally shown to the people. The appellation of *fainéans*, which was given to them, aptly expresses their stupid inactivity. A. D. 654.

5 Fredeg. cap. xliii.

After the death of Pepin—who, by restoring national assemblies (which the despotism of former mayors had abolished), by turning the restless impetuosity of the French against foreign enemies, and other wise measures, had quietly enjoyed the supreme power—his authority passed into the hands of his widow Plectrude, whose grandson, yet an infant, was created mayor. So high was the veneration of the French for the memory of that great man!—But the government of a woman was ill suited to those turbulent times, though the insignificant kings were content to live under the guardianship of a child. Charles Martel, natural son of Pepin, was suspected of ambitious views by Plectrude, and imprisoned. He found means, however, to make his escape, and was received by the Austrasians as their deliverer. His superior talents soon exalted him to the same degree of power which his father had enjoyed, and he was no less worthy of it. By a signal victory, obtained near Tours in 733, he saved France from the sword of the Saracens, who had already subjected Spain: and he kept all the neighbouring nations in awe by his wise and vigorous administration; yet he would not assume any higher appellation than that of Duke of France, conscious that the title of King could add nothing to his power. But his son Pepin, less modest or more vain, assumed the sovereignty in name as well as reality, excluding for ever the descendants of Clovis, or the Merovingian race, from the throne of France.

A.D. 714.

A.D. 752.

The circumstances of that revolution I shall soon have occasion to relate. At present we must take a view of the other states of Europe.

6 Adon. *Chron.*——*Annal. Metens.*

LETTER IV.

Of the Affairs of Spain under the Dominion of the Visigoths, and under the Moors, till the Reign of Abdarrahman.

SPAIN, my dear Philip, next merits your attention, as the second great kingdom on this side of the Alps. Soon after the Visigoths had founded their monarchy in that Roman province, already over-run by the Vandals and the Suevi, the clergy became possessed of more power than the prince. So early was the tyranny of the church in Spain! Almost all causes, both civil and ecclesiastical, were referred to the bishops: they even decided in their councils the most weighty affairs of the nation. With the nobles, among whom they held the first rank, they often disposed of the crown, which was more elective than hereditary[1]. The kingdom was one theatre of revolutions and crimes. The number of kings assassinated fills the soul with horror. The Barbarians, after their establishment, contracted new vices: their ferocity became bloody. What crimes did not bigotry alone produce! A.D. 467.

In order to make you fully sensible of this, as well as inform you of all that is necessary to be known in the history of the Visigoths in Spain, I need only mention the principal reigns.

Leovigild, who died in 586, and who is so much celebrated for his victories over the Suevi, whom he entirely subdued, put to death his son Hermenegild, because he had embraced the Catholic faith, he himself being an Arian. Recared, however, his other son and successor, abjured Arianism. The Arians were persecuted in their turn. The spirit of persecution daily increased. Sisebut, a prince in other respects wise, and whose valour dispos-

1 Geddes' *Tracts*, vol. ii. See also Saavedra, *Corona Gothica.*

sessed the Greek emperors of what territory they had continued to hold on the Spanish coasts, obliged

A. D. 612. the Jews, on pain of death, to receive baptism. In the reign of this monarch the empire of the Visigoths was at its height, comprehending not only Spain, but also some neighbouring provinces of Gaul, and part of Mauritania. Chintila, a subsequent king, banished all the Jews; and, in an assembly of divines, convoked during his reign, it was declared that no prince should ascend the Spanish throne without swearing to enforce all the laws enacted against that unfortunate people. Under the reign of Recesuint, the election of kings was reserved by a council to the bishops, and to the palatines, or principal officers of the crown.—Thus the Spanish nobility lost one of their most essential rights.

Wamba, who defeated the Saracens in an attempt upon Spain, was deprived of the crown, because he had

A. D. 680. been clothed in the habit of a *penitent*, while labouring under the influence of poison, administered by the ambitious Erviga! This stroke of priestcraft, the first of the kind that we observe in history, shows at a distance what might be expected from clerical finesse. A council adjudged the throne to Erviga; and another council, holden during his reign, prohibited the kings, under penalty of damnation, from marrying a king's widow. This cannon is a sufficient proof of the spirit of legislation which at that time prevailed in Spain. The debauchery, cruelty, and impiety of Witiza, whose wickedness knew no bounds, occasioned a civil war in 710. Roderic, or Roderigue, dethroned this prince, and was himself dethroned by a people whom nothing could withstand[2].

The Mohammedan religion was already established in many countries. Mohammed, who erected at Mecca a spiritual and temporal monarchy, had died in 632; and

2 Ferreras, *Hist. Hisp.* vol. ii.—Mariana *de Rebus Hispaniæ*, lib. vi.—Greg. Turon. lib. vi.

his countrymen, the Arabs or Saracens, soon after over-ran great part of Asia, and all that part of Africa which was under the Roman dominion. Animated by the most violent spirit of fanaticism, their valour was altogether irresistible. The Koran promised heaven and eternal sensuality to such as fell in battle, and the conquerors always tendered liberty and protection to those who embraced their superstition. They threatened the whole world with subjection. Count Julian, whose daughter king Roderic had dishonoured, invited them, it is said, to land in Spain. Nor can this circumstance be deemed improbable, if we consider the character of the times, revolutions being then more frequently occasioned by the private vices of princes than by any other cause.

The Saracens, already masters of Mauritania, now Barbary (a name which the lawless ferocity of their descendants gave to that country, as it gave to them the name of Maures or Moors), made a descent upon Spain; and by the decisive battle of Xeres, put an end to the empire of the Visigoths[3]. Mousa, viceroy of Africa under the khalif Walid, came over to finish the conquest. According to the prudent policy of the Mohammedans (the only enthusiasts who ever united the spirit of toleration with a zeal for making proselytes), he offered the inhabitants their religion and laws, on condition that they should pay to him the same subsidy which they had paid to their former sovereigns; and such as embraced the religion of the conquerors were entitled to all their privileges. Most cities submitted without resistance to the bold invader: others he reduced by force, burning and pillaging them. Oppas, archbishop of Seville, and uncle to the children of Witiza, traitorously joined the Saracens, and sacrificed his country and his religion to his hatred against Roderic. But Pelagius, a prince of the royal blood, remained firm in his faith and duty; and, when

Nov. 714.

3 Rod. Tolet. *Hist. Arab.—Hist. de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne, sous la Domination des Arabes, par* Cardonne, tome i.

he could no longer keep the field against the Infidels, he retired to the mountains of Asturias, followed by a number of faithful adherents. There he founded
A.D. 717. a Christian kingdom, which he defended by his valour, and transmitted to his posterity[4].

Unwilling to confine their ambition within the limits of the Pyrenées, the conquerors of Spain invaded France. Though baffled, they renewed their irruptions; and their leader Abdarrahman penetrated to the banks of the Loire. Charles Martel, as you have already seen, put a stop to their career by a memorable battle; and, if we believe the historians of those times, they lost in this action above three hundred thousand men. But such exaggerations are fit only for romance.

Spain was at first very miserable under the dominion of the Moors. The governors, being dependent on the viceroy of Africa, who allowed them to continue but a short time in their government, were more busy in fleecing the Spanish nation, than in the administration of justice or the preservation of good order. Civil wars arose among the Moslems themselves; and the khalifs or successors of the pseudo-prophet, who had made Damascus the seat of their court, were unable to quell those disorders. The competitions for the khalifate, as might be expected, even favoured the views of the rebels. At length that august dignity, which included both the highest
A.D. 750. regal and sacerdotal eminence, passed from the family of the Ommiades to that of the Abassides. This revolution, which was bloody, gave birth to another, truly advantageous to Spain, but injurious to the Christian faith.

Abdarrahman, called also Al-Mansour, a prince of the
A.D. 757. blood royal, who escaped in the massacre of the Ommiades, founded in Spain an independent kingdom, consisting of all those provinces which had been

4 Mariana, lib. vi. et vii.—Ferreras, vol. ii.

subject to the khalifs[5]. He fixed his residence at Cordova, which became the seat of the arts, of magnificence, and of pleasure. Without persecuting the Christians, he was able, by his artful policy, almost to extinguish Christianity in his dominions, by depriving the bishops of their dioceses, by reserving all honours and offices for the followers of his prophet, and by promoting intermarriages between the Christians and the Moslems. No prince in Europe, of that age, was equal to Abdarrahman in wisdom, nor did any people surpass the Arabs, in whatever tends to the aggrandisement of the human soul. Lately enemies to the sciences, they now cultivated them with success, and enjoyed a considerable share both of learning and politeness, while the rest of mankind were sunk in ignorance and barbarism.

I shall afterward have occasion to be more particular on this subject. In the mean time, we must take a survey of Italy, the Grecian empire, and France, from the time of Charles Martel to that of Charle-magne.

5 Abulfeda's *Moslem Annals.*

LETTER V.

Of the Dominion of the Ostrogoths in Italy, and the Affairs of the Lombards, till the reign of Luitprand.

ITALY experienced a variety of fortunes after it lost its ancient masters, before it fell into the hands of Charlemagne. It was first conquered by the Heruli, a people from the extremity of the Euxine or Black Sea, who held it only a short time, being expelled by the Ostrogoths under Theodoric. Several of the Ostro-Gothic kings of Italy were princes of great prudence and humanity. They allowed the Italians (or Romans, as they still affected to be called) to retain their possessions, their laws, their religion, their own govern-

A. D. 476.

A. D. 493.

ment, and their own magistrates, reserving only to the Goths the principal military employments. They acknowledged the emperors of Constantinople as their superiors in rank, but not in jurisdiction. Ravenna was the seat of their court, and in real magnificence vied with ancient Rome, as their equitable administration did with the reigns of Trajan and Antoninus[1]. They were at last subdued by Belisarius and Narses, the generals of Justinian, who, having recovered Africa from the Vandals, had the pleasure of uniting Italy once more to the Eastern
A. D. 553. or Greek empire.

Soon after the extinction of the Ostro-Gothic realm, a great part of Italy was seised by Alboin, king of
A. D. 568. the Lombards or Longobards, a Gothic nation. He and his successors made Pavia the place of their residence. The Government of Italy was now considerably changed. Alboin established the feudal policy in those countries which he had conquered, settling the principal officers of the army, with the ducal title, in the chief cities of every province. A similar kind of government prevailed in that part of Italy which remained subject to the emperors of Constantinople; the exarch or supreme governor, who resided at Ravenna, appointing the dukes or chief magistrates of the other cities, and removing them at pleasure. Even Rome itself was governed by a duke, the very name of the senate and consuls being abolished.

Alboin was one of the greatest princes of his time, and no less skilled in the science of reigning than in
A.D. 572. the art of war; but he was slain by the treachery of his wife Rosamond, before he had leisure to perfect

1 Procop. *Bell. Goth.*—Cassiodor. lib. viii.—The lenity of the Ostrogoths, on their settling in Italy, may be attributed to two causes—partly to that polish which their manners may be supposed to have received during their intercourse with the Romans, whom they had long served as auxiliaries against the Huns and other barbarous nations; partly to the character of Theodoric the Gothic conqueror, who, having been educated at Constantinople, and initiated in all the learning of the times, retained ever after a just admiration of the Roman laws and arts.

the government of his kingdom. Clephis, his successor, was an able, but a barbarous prince. His cruelties gave such a disgust to regal power, that they resolved, after his death, to change their form of government; and for the space of twelve years they chose no other king, but lived subject to their dukes. These dukes had hitherto acknowledged the royal authority; but when the kingly power was abolished, each duke became sovereign of his own city and the neighbouring district[2].

The Lombards, during that interregnum, extended their conquests in Italy. But, when they were threatened by foreign enemies, they were sensible of the expediency of restoring their ancient form of government, and committing the management of the war to a single person. For this purpose the heads of the nation assembled, and with one voice called Autharis, the son of Clephis, to the throne. This prince perfected that form of government which had been introduced by Alboin. Perceiving that the dukes, who had ruled their several districts like independent princes for so many years, were unwilling to part with their authority, he allowed them to continue in their governments, but reserved to himself the supreme jurisdiction. He obliged them to contribute a part of their revenues toward the support of his royal dignity, and take an oath that they would assist him to the utmost of their power in time of war[3]. After settling the government of his kingdom, he enacted several salutary laws for the preservation of tranquillity and good order. He was the first of the Lombard kings who embraced Christianity, and many of his subjects followed his example; but, as he leaned to the Arian system, like most of the barbarian conquerors, whose simple minds could not comprehend the mysteries of the Trinity and incarnation, many disputes arose between the Arian and

A. D. 586.

2 Paul. Diac. *de Gestis Longob.* lib. ii.

3 Paul. Diac. lib. iii.

Catholic bishops; for the Romans, or native Italians, were then as zealous Catholics as they are at this day.

Liberty of conscience, however, was allowed under all the Lombard kings; and Rotharis, who surpassed all his predecessors in wisdom and valour, was so moderate in his principles, and so indulgent to his people, that during his reign most cities of Italy had two bishops, one Catholic, and the other Arian. He was the first prince who gave written laws to the Lombards. He summoned at
A.D. 643. Pavia a general diet of the nobles; and such regulations as they approved he ordered to be digested into a code, and observed over all his dominions. His military talents were not inferior to his civil merits. He greatly extended the limits of his kingdom, and was so successful over the imperial forces, that no future hostilities passed between the exarchs and the kings of the Lombards, till the reign of Luitprand.

But the eastern emperor Constans, before that time, landed in Italy with a considerable army, in the
A.D. 663. hope of expelling the Lombards and re-uniting their kingdom to his dominions. He at first gained some inconsiderable advantages; but his army was afterward totally routed by Romuald, duke of Benevento, whose father Grimoald had been elected king of the Lombards.

Grimoald was a prudent prince, and in all respects worthy of the dignity to which he had been raised. As soon as he was free from the alarms of war, he
A.D. 668. applied himself wholly to the arts of peace. He reformed the laws of Rotharis, to which the Italians as well as the Lombards now appealed from choice. Influenced by the arguments of John, bishop of Bergamo, he renounced the tenets of Arius. His successors following his example, Arianism was at length relinquished by the whole nation of the Lombards[4].

4 Paul. Diac. lib. v.

Luitprand gave strong pooofs of his wisdom and valour from the moment he ascended the throne: but his courage sometimes bordered on rashness. Being informed that two of his attendants had conspired against his life, and only waited an opportunity of executing their intent, he, in a private conference, upbraided them with their guilt. Moved by such heroic firmness, they threw themselves at his feet, as wretches unworthy of mercy. The king, however, thought otherwise; he not only pardoned them, but received them into favour and confidence. Having thus won his domestic enemies by kindness, and strengthened his interests abroad by marrying the daughter of the duke of the Boiarii, Luitprand applied himself, in imitation of his two illustrious predecessors, Rotharis and Grimoald, to the formation of new laws. In one of these, his sagacity appears highly conspicuous. He blames "the ridiculous custom of trials by duel, in "which we would force God to manifest his justice according to the caprice of men;" adding, that "he has only "tolerated the abuse, because the Lombards are so much "attached to it[5]." A.D. 712.

But Luitprand's great qualities were in some measure shaded by his boundless ambition. Not satisfied with the extensive dominions left him by his predecessors, he formed the intention of making himself sole master of Italy; and an opportunity soon offered for attempting the execution of that enterprise.

Leo the Isaurian, then emperor of Constantinople, where theological disputes had long mingled with affairs of state, and where casuists were more common upon the throne than politicians, piously prohibited the worship of images; ordering all the statues to be broken in pieces, and the paintings in the churches to be pulled down and burned. The populace, whose devotion did not extend beyond such objects—and the monks and A.D. 726.

5 *Leges Longob. in Codice Lindenbrog.*

secular priests, interested in supporting the mummery—were so highly provoked at this innovation, that they publicly revolted in many places. The emperor, however, took care to have his edict put in force in the East; and he commanded the exarch of Ravenna, and his other officers in the West, to see it as punctually obeyed in their governments. In obedience to that injunction, the exarch began to pull down the images in the churches and public places at Ravenna; a conduct which incensed the superstitious multitude to such a degree, that they openly declared they would rather renounce their allegiance to the emperor than the worship of images. They considered him as an abominable heretic, whom it was lawful to resist by force, and took arms for that purpose[6].

Luitprand, judging this the proper season to put his ambitious project in execution, quickly assembled his forces, and unexpectedly appeared before Ravenna; not doubting that the reduction of that important place would be speedily followed by the conquest of all the imperial dominions in Italy. The exarch, though not fully prepared for such an assault, defended the city with great courage; but, finding that he could not long withstand so great a force, and despairing of relief, he privately retired. Luitprand, informed of this, made a vigorous attack, took the city by storm, and gave it up to be plundered by his soldiers, who found in it an immense booty,
A.D. 728. as it had been successively the seat of the western emperors, of the Gothic kings, and of the exarchs. Alarmed at the fate of Ravenna, most of the other cities in the exarchate surrendered without resistance[7]. Luitprand seemed, therefore, in a fair way to become master of all Italy. But that conquest neither he nor any of his successors could ever complete; and the attempt proved fatal to the kingdom of the Lombards.

6 Meimb. *Hist. Iconoclast.*

7 Paul. Diac. lib. vi.

LETTER VI.

Of the Pope's temporal Power, and the Affairs of Italy in general, the Empire of Constantinople, and the Kingdom of France, from the Time of Charles Martel to that of Charle-magne.

THOUGH Rome was now governed by a duke, who depended on the exarch of Ravenna, the pope, or bishop, had the chief authority in that city. He was yet less conspicuous by his power than the respect which religion inspired for his see, and the confidence which was reposed in his character. St. Gregory, who died in 604, had negotiated with princes upon matters of state, and his successors divided their attention between clerical and political pursuits. To free themselves from the dominion of the Greek emperors, without falling a prey to the kings of Italy, was the great object of these ambitious prelates. In order to accomplish this important purpose, they employed with success both religion and intrigue; and at last established a spiritual and temporal monarchy, which of all human institutions, perhaps, most merits the attention of man, whether we consider its nature, its progress, or its prodigious consequences.

Gregory II. had offended the emperor Leo, by opposing his edict against the worship of images: but he was more afraid of the growing power of the Lombards than of the emperor's threats; he therefore resolved to check the career of Luitprand. The only prince in Italy, to whom he could have recourse, was Ursus, duke of Venice, the Venetians making already no contemptible figure. Not less alarmed than Gregory at the progress of so powerful a neighbour, Ursus and the Venetians promised to assist the exarch (who had fled to them for protection) with the whole strength of the republic. They accordingly fitted out a considerable fleet, while the exarch conducted an army by land, and retook Ravenna before Luitprand could march to its relief.

As Ravenna had been chiefly recovered by the interposition of Gregory, he hoped to be able to prevail on the emperor to revoke his edict against the worship of images in the West. Leo, however, sensible that the pope had been influenced on that occasion merely by his own interest, was only more provoked at his obstinacy, and resolved that the edict should be obeyed even in Rome itself. He even ordered the exarch Paul to procure the assassination of the pope, or send him in chains to Constantinople. But Gregory, far from being intimidated by the emperor's threats, solemnly excommunicated the exarch for attempting to put the imperial edict in execution, exhorting all the Italian cities to continue steadfast in the catholic faith. Luitprand, though highly incensed against Gregory, assisted him in his distress; and the populace, rising at Ravenna, murdered the exarch, and made great slaughter of the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers. The duke of Naples shared the same fate with Paul; and, as Leo still required that his favourite edict should be enforced at Rome, the people of
A.D. 730. that city, at the instigation of Gregory, withdrew their allegiance from the Greek emperor[1]. Such was the rise of the pope's temporal power.

Informed of this revolt, and not doubting who was the author of it, the emperor levied a powerful army, to chastise the rebels, and take vengeance on the pope. Gregory, alarmed at these warlike preparations, looked round for some power on which he might depend for protection. The Lombards were possessed of sufficient force; but they were too near neighbours to be trusted: the Venetians, though zealous catholics, could not resist with effect the strength of the empire; and the Spanish peninsula was under the yoke of the Saracens. The French seemed the only people to whom it was advisable to apply for aid, as they were at once able to oppose the emperor, and enemies to his edict. France was then governed by Charles Mar-

1 Anastas., *Vit. Greg.* II.—Maimb. *Hist. Iconoclast.*

tel, the greatest commander of his age, to whom Gregory sent a solemn embassy, entreating him to defend the Romans and the church against the attempts of Leo. The ambassadors were received with extraordinary marks of honour: a treaty was concluded[2]; and the French, glad to get any concern in the affairs of Italy, became the protectors of the church. A.D. 731.

In the mean time considerable alterations were made by death. Gregory II. did not live to see his negotiation with France finished. He was succeeded by Gregory III.; and, ten years after, Leo was followed on the imperial throne by his son Constantine Copronymus, who not only renewed his father's edict against the worship of images, but prohibited the invocation of saints. This new edict confirmed the Romans in the resolution they had taken of separating themselves entirely from the empire; more especially as, being now under the protection of France, they had nothing to fear from Constantinople. They accordingly drove out of their city such of the imperial officers as had hitherto been suffered to continue in it, and thus abolished the very shadow of subjection to the emperor. Soon after Leo, died Charles Martel, and also Gregory III. The next pope was Zachary, an active and enterprising prelate, who, immediately after his election, visited Luitprand, and obtained the restitution of the towns which had been yielded to that prince as a ransom for Rome, when it was in danger of falling into his hands[3]. A.D. 741.

Luitprand henceforth relinquished all ambitious thoughts, dying in peace with the church and with men. Rachis, his successor, confirmed the treaty with the pope; but, being afterwards inflamed with a thirst of conquest, he invaded the Roman dukedom, and laid siege to Perugia. Trusting to the influence of persuasion, Zachary repaired to the camp of Rachis, and A.D. 748. A.D. 750.

2 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.*

3 Paul. Diac. lib. vi.

so forcibly represented to him the punishment reserved for those who unjustly invade the property of others, that the king not only raised the siege, but, being completely subdued by the eloquence of the pontiff, resigned his crown, and retired to the monastery of Monte Cassino, prostrating himself first at Zachary's feet, and taking the habit of St. Benedict[4].

While affairs were in this situation in Italy, Pepin, son of Charles Martel, governed France in the character of mayor under Childeric III.; and, being probably acquainted with the sentiments of his holiness, proposed to Zachary a case of conscience, which had not hitherto been submitted to the bishop of Rome. He desired to know, whether a prince incapable of governing, or a minister who ably supported the weight of royal authority, ought to have the title of king. Zachary decided in favour of the minister; and the French clergy encouraged the pretensions of Pepin, because he had restored the lands of which Charles Martel had robbed them. The nobles respected him, because he was powerful and brave; and the people despised the sluggard kings, whom they scarcely knew by name. The judgement of the pope, therefore, silenced every scruple. Childeric was deposed; or, more properly, degraded, for he could never be said to
A. D. 752. reign. He was shut up in a monastery. Pepin was raised to the throne; and Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, the famous apostle of the Germans, anointed him solemnly at Soissons[5].

This ceremony of anointing, borrowed from the Jews, and hitherto unknown to the French nation, or only used at the baptism of Clovis, seemed to bestow on the king a kind of divine character: and so far it was useful, by inspiring respect. But, as ignorance abuses all things, the bishops soon imagined that they could confer royalty by anointing princes—an opinion which was followed by many

4 Paul. Diac. lib. vi. 5 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.*

pernicious consequences. The Eastern emperors had long been crowned by the patriarchs of Constantinople: the popes, in like manner, crowned the emperors of the West. Crowning and anointing were deemed necessary to sovereignty. A pious ceremony, it was imagined or pretended, gave the church a power of disposing of kingdoms.

These observations, my dear Philip, you will find frequent occasion to apply. I offer them here, in order to awaken your attention. We must see things in their causes, to reason distinctly on their effects.

Success soon attended the crafty policy of the popes: the new king of France repaid their favour with interest. Astulphus, king of the Lombards, less piously inclined than his brother Rachis, thought only of conquest. In imitation of Luitprand, he resolved to make himself master of all Italy; and, while the emperor was engaged in a war with the Saracens and Bulgarians, and in a still more hot and dangerous war against images, the Lombards invaded the exarchate, took Ravenna, and subdued the whole province. A.D. 753.

Ambition is only increased by accession of dominion. Astulphus no sooner saw himself master of Ravenna and its territory, than he began to lay claim to the Roman dukedom, and to Rome itself. He urged the right of conquest. This, he alleged, entitled him to the same power over that city and its dukedom which the emperors, and also the exarchs, their viceroys, had formerly enjoyed, as he was now in possession of the whole exarchate. To enforce his demand, he led an army towards Rome, reducing many cities in its neighbourhood, and threatening to put the inhabitants to the sword, if they should refuse to acknowledge him as their sovereign. Stephen III., then pope, no less alarmed at the approach of so powerful a prince than at the severity of his message, endeavoured to appease him by a solemn embassy. But presents, prayers,

and entreaties, were employed in vain; Astulphus wished to govern Rome.

Stephen now resolved to solicit the aid of France. Pepin, mindful of his obligations to Zachary, and now firmly seated on the throne of Clovis, readily promised his assistance, and sent two ambassadors to conduct the pope to Paris. Astulphus permitted him to pass; and a treaty, favourable to the see of Rome, was concluded. Pepin and his two sons, on this occasion, received from Stephen the honours of holy unction, and a grant of the title of Patrician[6]. Pepin endeavoured, before he commenced his expedition, to persuade Astulphus to restore what he had conquered, and thus prevent the effusion of Christian blood. But, finding the king of the Lombards deaf to his entreaties, he crossed the Alps, and advanced to Pavia. Astulphus now, convinced of his danger, sued for peace, and obtained it, on condition that he should deliver up to the pope, not to the emperor, all the places which he had taken. He consented; but instead of fulfilling his engagements, no sooner did he hear of the departure of Pepin, than he again rushed into the Roman territory, took several cities, and laid siege to the capital.

In this extremity, Stephen had recourse to his protector the king of France, writing to him those remarkable letters which are still extant, and in which he artfully introduces St. Peter, to whom the donation of the exarchate had been made in the late treaty, conjuring Pepin, his two sons, and the states of France, to come to his relief; promising them all good things, both in this world and the next, in case of compliance, and denouncing damnation as the consequence of a refusal[7]. Pepin, much affected by this eloquence, wild as it may seen, crossed the Alps a second time; and Astulphus again took refuge in Pavia.

The emperor informed of the treaty, remonstrated by

6 Leonis Ostiensis *Hist.* lib. i.

7 Anastas. *Vit. Steph.* III.

his ambassadors against it, and offered to pay the expenses of the war. But Pepin replied, that the exarchate lately belonged to the Lombards, who had acquired it by right of arms, as the Romans had originally done; and that the right of the Lombards was now in him, so that he could dispose of that territory as he thought proper. He had bestowed it, he said, on St. Peter, that the catholic faith might be preserved in its purity, free from the damnable heresies of the Greeks; and all the money in the world, he added, should never make him revoke that gift, which he was determined to maintain to the church with the last drop of his blood. In consequence of this resolution, the ambassadors were dismissed, without being suffered to reply. Pepin pressed the siege of Pavia; and Astulphus, finding himself unable to hold out, promised to fulfil the former agreement, giving hostages as a pledge of his fidelity, and putting the pope immediately in possession of Comachio, a place of great importance at that time.

Before Pepin returned to France he renewed his donation to St. Peter, yielding to Stephen and his successors the exarchate; Æmilia, now Romagna, and Pentapolis, now Marca d'Ancona, to be possessed by them for ever; the kings of France, as patricians or protectors of the Roman people, retaining only an ideal superiority, which was soon forgotten[8]. Thus was the sceptre added to the keys, the sovereignty to the priesthood; and thus were the popes enriched with the spoils of the Lombard kings and the Roman emperors. A.D. 756.

Astulphus, soon after he had ratified his treaty with France, was killed by accident, when he was preparing to recover his conquests. Pepin continued to extend his sway and his renown; and, after having imposed tribute on the Saxons and Sclavonians, having exacted an oath of fidelity

8 The nature of Pepin's donation has been disputed, and some writers have even denied that such a grant ever occurred; but, on comparing authorities, and observing the scope of history, the matter seems to have been nearly as represented in the text. The impertinences of Voltaire on this subject, under the form of reasoning, are too contemptible to deserve notice.

from the duke of Bavaria, and annexed Aquitaine to his crown, he died in the fifty-fourth year of his Sept. 768. age, equally respected at home and abroad. He never affected absolute power, but referred all matters of importance to the national assemblies, of which he was the oracle. By the consent of the nobles, he divided his kingdom between his sons Charles and Carloman.

The reign of Charles, known by the name of Charlemagne or Charles the Great, introduces a new æra, and will furnish the subject of a future Letter. In the mean time, we must trace the settlement of other Barbarians, and the rise of another great kingdom.

LETTER VII.

Of Britain, from the Time when it was relinquished by the Romans, to the End of the Saxon Heptarchy.

THE affairs of our own island, my dear son, now claim your attention. It was ultimately evacuated by the Romans about the year 420, after they had been masters of the southern and most fertile part of it above three centuries.

Never, perhaps, was the debasing influence of despotism so fully displayed as in its effect on our ancient countrymen. No people were ever more brave, none more jealous of liberty, than the Britons. With ordinary weapons, and little knowledge of military discipline, they struggled long with the Roman power, and were only subdued at last in consequence of their want of union. But, after a long course of tranquil submission, when the exigencies of the empire obliged the Romans to recall their legions from this island, and resign to the inhabitants their native rights, the degenerate South-Britons were incapable of prizing the gift. Conscious of their inability to protect themselves against their northern neighbours,

and wanting resolution to attempt it, they would gladly have lived in security and slavery[1]. They, therefore, repeatedly had recourse to their conquerors: and the Romans, beside occasionally sending over a legion to the aid of the Britons, assisted them in repairing the rampart of Antoninus, which extended between the friths of Forth and Clyde. This wall was deemed by the Romans a necessary barrier against the Scots and Picts.

Much time has been spent in investigating the origin of the Scots and Picts, and warm disputes have arisen on the subject[2]. It is unnecessary to trouble you with a detail of the various opinions of historians and antiquaries on these points. I was once inclined to think that the Picts were the descendants of those South-Britons who, at different times, fled to the northward from Roman violence; but, on more attentive reflection and inquiry, I am convinced, by the express authority of Bede, and by other considerations, that they were Scandinavian emigrants, who passed from Norway into the country now called Scotland, long before the Romans visited this island, and were not of the Celtic, but of the Gothic race. With regard to the Scots, I am disposed to admit the assertion that they came from Ireland, and formed a settlement in North-Britain about the middle of the third century, and that, in the fifth, their descendants were compelled, by the fierce hostilities of the Picts, to take refuge in the sister island, till an opportunity offered itself for a renewal of colonisation.

1 Gild. *Hist.*—Bedæ *Hist. Eccles. Gentis Anglorum*, lib. i. Mr. Gibbon, whose historical scepticism is as well known as his theological incredulity, has attempted to controvert the degeneracy of the Britons under the Roman government. But facts will speak for themselves: these he has not been able to destroy. The Britons, who fled before their naked and barbarous neighbours, were surely inferior to those that intrepidly contended with the Roman legions, under Julius Cæsar and other great commanders.

2 See Macpherson's Introd. *Hist. of Brit. Origin, &c. of the Caledonians*, Whitaker's *Hist. of Manchester*, *Genuine Hist. Brit.* and Hume's *Hist. of England*, vol. i. note A.

The Picts no sooner heard of the final departure of the Romans than they considered the whole British island as their own. One party crossed the frith of Forth, in boats made of leather, while another A.D. 421. attacked with fury the Roman wall, which the Britons soon abandoned, fleeing like timorous deer, and leaving their country a prey to the enemy. The Picts made dreadful havoc of the fugitives; and, meeting with no opposition, they ravaged the southern parts of the island with fire and sword. Famine followed with all its horrid train; and the mischiefs of pestilence were added.

When the South-Britons had long been harassed with these irruptions, they once more had recourse to Rome. They wrote to Aëtius, then consul for the third A.D. 448. time, that memorable letter (entitled *The Groans of the Britons*) which paints their unhappy condition as strongly as it is possible for words: "We know not," said they, "even which way to flee. Chased by the "Barbarians to the sea, and forced back by the sea upon "the Barbarians, we have only the choice of two deaths; "for we must either perish by the sword, or be swallowed up by the waves[3]." What answer they received is uncertain; but it is well known that they obtained no assistance, Rome being then threatened by Attila, the most terrible enemy that ever invaded the empire.

The Britons, however, amidst all their calamities, had one consolation; they had embraced Christianity; a religion which, above all others, teaches the endurance of misfortunes—which encourages its votaries to triumph in adversity, and inspires the soul with joy in the hour of affliction. Many of them fled over to Gaul, and settled in the province of Armorica, to which they gave the name of Britanny, or Bretagne. Some of them submitted to the Picts; while others, collecting courage from despair, sallied from their woods and caves upon the secure and

3 Gild. *Hist.*—Bedæ *Hist.*

roving invaders, cut many of them to pieces, and obliged the rest to retire into their own country. But, the enemy threatening to return with superior forces, the distressed Britons, by the advice of Vortigern (who then possessed the principal authority among them), called the Saxons to their assistance, by a solemn deputation[4].

The Saxons, like all the ancient German tribes, were a free, brave, independent people. They had arrived at that degree of civilisation in which the mind has acquired sufficient force for enterprise, and seems to derive energy from the unimpaired vigour of the body. A nation, taken collectively, is never perhaps capable of such great achievements as in this state of half-civilisation. The Saxons had spread themselves over an extensive tract of country; and, when the Britons implored their aid, they were masters not only of Holstein, Westphalia, Saxony, East and West Friseland, but also of Holland and Zealand. They readily complied with the request of Vortigern; and, having fitted out three large transports, about fifteen hundred of them put to sea under the command of the enterprising brothers, Hengist and Horsa. These chieftains landed in the isle of Thanet, which was assigned to them as a possession; and a league was formed between them and the British prince[5]. Soon after their arrival, they marched against the northern ravagers, who had made a new irruption, and advanced as far as Stamford. Unable to withstand the steady valour of the Saxons, the Picts were routed with great slaughter; and the Britons, felicitating themselves on an expedient by which they had freed their country from so cruel an

A. D. 449.

4 Bed. lib. i.—Gul. Malmesburiens. *de Gestis Regum Anglorum*, lib. i.

5 See Gildas and Bede; also *the Saxon Chronicle*, p. 13.—Mr. Gibbon, on the authority of Nennius, gives a different account of this affair. He represents Hengist and Horsa as two fugitive adventurers, who, in a piratical cruise, were taken into the pay of the British prince. But I can see no reason for adopting such an opinion; for not only the circumstances favour the common mode of telling the story, but the authority of the venerable Bede is surely superior to that of the fabulous Nennius.

enemy, hoped thenceforth to enjoy security under the protection of their warlike auxiliaries.

But mankind, in the possession of present good, are apt to overlook the prospect of future evil. The Britons did not foresee that their deliverers were to be their conquerors; though it must have been evident to any disinterested observer, that the day of subjection was nigh. The reflections of Hengist and Horsa, after their late victory, were very different from those of the Britons. They considered with what ease they might subdue an indolent and degenerate people, and sent to their countrymen intelligence of the fertility and opulence of South-Britain, inviting them to come and share in the spoils of the country[6].

The invitation was readily accepted. Seventeen vessels soon arrived with five thousand men, who, joined to those already in the island, formed a considerable army[7]. Though now justly alarmed at the number of their allies, the Britons sought security and relief only in passive submission; and even that unmanly expedient soon failed them. The Saxons pulled off the mask: they complained that the promised subsidies were ill paid, and demanded larger supplies of corn and other provisions. These being refused, as exorbitant, they formed an alliance with the Picts, and proceeded to open hostilities against the people whom they had come over to protect.

The Britons were at last under the necessity of taking arms; and, having deposed Vortigern, who had rendered himself odious by his vices, and the unfortunate issue of his rash counsels, they put themselves under the command of his son Vortimer. Many battles were fought between the Saxons and Britons with various success, but chiefly to the advantage of the former; and, in one of these conflicts, Horsa was slain. The sole command

6 *Ann. Beverl.* p. 49.

7 Had Hengist and Horsa been mere exiles, they would not soon have found so many followers.

now devolved upon Hengist; who, reinforced with fresh adventurers from Germany, furiously ravaged the territories of the Britons. Anxious to spread the terror of his arms, he massacred multitudes of all ranks, of both sexes, and all ages[8]. The description is too horrible to read; and, for the honour of humanity, I am willing to suppose it to be partly untrue.

Of the unhappy Britons who escaped the general slaughter, some took refuge among rocks and mountains; many perished by hunger: and many, forsaking their asylum, preserved their lives at the expense of their liberty. Others, crossing the sea, sought shelter among their countrymen in Armorica. Those who remained at home suffered every species of misery: they were not only robbed of all temporal, but spiritual benefits[9]. In this extremity, a British and a Christian hero appeared. Arthur, prince of the Silures (supposed by some to have been the same with Ambrosius), revived the expiring valour of his countrymen. He defeated the Saxons in several engagements, particularly in the famous battle of Badon-hill, which procured the Britons many years of tranquillity. A. D. 520. But, the success of Hengist and his followers having excited the ambition of other German tribes, successive swarms poured upon the Britons, who ultimately found themselves unequal to the contest, A. D. 585. and therefore retired into Cornwall, Wales, and Cumberland, where they formed independent principalities[10].

The Saxons and Angles, or Anglo-Saxons[11] (for they are mentioned under both these denominations), were now absolute masters of the greater part of South-Britain,

8 Bed. lib. i.—Gild. sec. xxiv.—Usserii *Antiq.* p. 226.

9 Bede, Gildas, Usher, ubi sup.

10 Gul. Malmesb. lib. i.—H. Huntingd. lib. ii.—*Chron. Sax.* p. 20.

11 The Saxons and Angles were originally distinct tribes; but, at the time of their landing in Britain, they were so much incorporated, as to pass sometimes under the one name, sometimes under the other. Hence arose the compound name of Anglo-Saxons. The Jutes had also a considerable share in the conquest of South-Britain.

which had changed not only its inhabitants, but its language, customs, and political institutions. History affords examples of few conquests more bloody, and few revolutions so violent, as that which was effected by the Saxons. In the course of their long war with the Britons, they established seven kingdoms, namely, those of Kent, Sussex, Essex, Wessex, Mercia, East-Anglia, and Northumberland. These realms formed what is commonly called the Saxon Heptarchy[12].

While the Saxons were contending with the Britons for dominion, their several princes, leagued against the common enemy, preserved an union of counsels and interests. But, after the wretched natives were shut up in their barren mountains, and the conquerors had nothing to fear from them, the bond of alliance was in a great measure dissolved among the princes of the heptarchy; and, although one prince seems still to have assumed, or to have been allowed, some ascendant over the rest, his authority was so limited, that each state acted as if entirely independent. Jealousies and dissensions arose among the Saxon chiefs, and these were followed by perpetual wars; which in Milton's opinion, are no more worthy of a particular narration, than the combats of kites or crows. And, independent of so great an authority, which however it would be presumption to slight, it may be safely affirmed, that the barren records transmitted to us, and the continued barbarities of the times, render it impossible for the most eloquent and discerning writer to make this portion of our history either instructive or entertaining. It will therefore be sufficient for me to observe,
A. D. 827. that, after a variety of inferior revolutions, the seven kingdoms were united by the valour and policy of Egbert, king of Wessex[13]. His dominions were

12 The extent of each kingdom is of too little importance now to deserve a particular description.

13 Wessex, or the kingdom of the West Saxons, extended over the counties of Hants, Dorset, Devon, Somerset, Wilts, and Berks.

nearly of the same extent with the territory now called ENGLAND; a name which was given to the empire of the Saxons in Britain at the union of the heptarchy, or, as some suppose, soon after the erection of the seventh kingdom.

The Anglo-Saxons, long before the time of Egbert, had been converted to Christianity by the preaching of Augustine, a Roman monk, and the zeal of Bertha, daughter of Caribert king of Paris, and wife to Ethelbert king of Kent; but, as they received that doctrine through the polluted channels of the church of Rome, though it opened an intercourse with the more polished states of Europe, it had not hitherto been very effectual either in purifying their minds, or in softening their manners. The grossest ignorance and superstition prevailed among them. Reverences to saints and reliques seemed to supplant the worship of the Supreme Being; donations to the church were supposed to atone for every violation of the laws of society; and monastic observances were more esteemed than moral virtues. Even the military virtues so habitual to the Saxons fell into neglect. The nobles themselves began to prefer the indolence and security of the cloister to the toils and tumults of war; and the crown, impoverished by continual benefactions to the church, had no rewards for the encouragement of valour.

This corrupt species of Christianity was attended with another train of inconveniences, proceeding from a superstitious attachment to the see of Rome. The Britons had conducted all ecclesiastical affairs by their own synods and councils, acknowledging no subordination to the Roman pontiff: but the Saxons, having received their religion through the medium of Italian monks, were taught to consider Rome as the capital of their faith. Pilgrimages to that city were accordingly represented as the most meritorious acts of devotion; and not only noblemen and ladies of rank undertook this tedious journey, but kings them-

selves, resigning their crowns, implored a safe passport to heaven at the foot of St. Peter's chair, and exchanged the purple for the sackcloth[14].

But England, even in those times of British darkness, gave birth to some men equal at least to any of the age in which they lived. Offa, king of Mercia, was thought worthy of the friendship of Charle-magne, the greatest prince that Europe had produced for many centuries; and Alcuin, an English clergyman, had the honour of instructing that illustrious monarch in the sciences, at a time when he was surrounded by all the literati of Christendom.

Having mentioned Charle-magne, I think it necessary to observe, that I shall finish the history of that great conqueror and legislator before I treat of the reign of Egbert, the first English monarch—a prince who was educated in the court and in the armies of the new emperor of the West. Meanwhile, my dear Philip, I must say a few words of the government, laws, and manners, which prevailed among the Saxons after their settlement in Britain.

14 Bed. lib. i. ii.—Spelm. *Conc.*

LETTER VIII.

Of the Government and Laws of the Anglo-Saxons.

IF the Saxons, on their settlement in this island, had established the same form of government with the other Gothic nations that seised the provinces of the Roman empire, this letter would have been in a great measure unnecessary; but as they rather exterminated than subdued the natives, and were under few apprehensions from fo-

reign enemies, they had no occasion to subject themselves to feudal services. They therefore retained entire their civil and military institutions: they transplanted into this island those principles of liberty and independence which they had so highly cherished at home, which had been transmitted to them from their ancestors, and which still continue to flourish among their descendants. Their original constitution was a kind of military democracy, in which the protection of the state was the voluntary care of its members, as every free man had a share in the government; and conquest was the interest of all, as all partook of the acquisitions. Their king, or chief, was only the first citizen of the community: his authority depended, as did his station, principally on his personal qualities. The succession was neither elective nor hereditary. A son who inherited his father's virtues and talents, was sure to succeed to his sway; but, if he happened to be weak or profligate, or was a minor, the next in blood, or the person of the greatest eminence in the state, generally procured an elevation to the throne.

We owe to the masterly pen of Tacitus this account of the primitive government of the Saxons. Unfortunately the Saxon Annals are too imperfect to enable us to delineate exactly the prerogatives of the kings, and the privileges of the people, after the settlement which was effected in Britain. The government might be somewhat different in the different kingdoms of the heptarchy, and might also undergo several changes before the Norman conquest; but of those changes we are in a great measure ignorant. We only know, that at all times, and in all the kingdoms, there was a national council, a Wittena-Gemot, or Assembly of the Wise Men, whose consent was necessary to the enactment of laws, and to give sanction to the measures of public administration. But, who the constituent members of that assembly were, has not hitherto been determined with certainty. The most probable

conjecture seems to be, that it consisted of the nobility, the dignified clergy, and all possessors of a certain portion of land[1].

The Saxons were divided into three orders of men; the noble, the free, and the servile. The nobles were called *thanes*, and were of two kinds, the principal and the inferior thanes. The latter seem to have had some dependence on the former, as the former had on the king; but of what nature is uncertain. The lower freemen among the Saxons were denominated *ceorles*, and were chiefly employed in husbandry; whence a husbandman and ceorle became synonymous terms. They farmed the lands of the nobility, or higher orders, and appear to have been removable at pleasure. But the slaves or villains were by much the most numerous class in the community; and being the property of their masters, were incapable of holding any property themselves. They were of two kinds: household slaves, after the manner of the ancients; and rustic slaves, who were sold or transferred, like cattle, with the soil. The long wars between the Saxons and Britons, and afterwards between the different princes of the heptarchy, seem to have been the cause of the disproportionate number of these unhappy men: for prisoners taken in battle were reduced to slavery by the laws of war, and were entirely at the disposal of their masters[2].

The higher nobility and dignified clergy among the Anglo-Saxons possessed a criminal jurisdiction within their own territories, and could punish without appeal such as they judged worthy of death. This was a dangerous privilege, and liable to the greatest abuse. But, although the Anglo-Saxon government seems at last to have become in some measure aristocratical, there were still considerable remains of the ancient democracy. All the freeholders

1 At first, five hides were deemed a sufficient qualification; but the required amount gradually rose to forty.

2 L. Edg. sec. xiv. apud Spelm. *Conc.* vol. i.—*Preface to* Brady's *Hist.*

assembled twice a year in the county-court, or *shire-gemot*, to receive appeals from the inferior courts—a practice well calculated for the preservation of general liberty, and for restraining the exorbitant power of the nobles. In these courts were decided all causes ecclesiastical as well as civil, the bishop and the alderman, or earl, presiding over them. The case was determined by a majority of voices, without much pleading, formality, or delay; the bishop and earl having no farther authority than to keep order among the freeholders, and offer advice[3]. Though it should be granted, therefore, that the wittenagemot was composed entirely of the greater thanes and dignified clergy, yet in a government where few taxes were imposed by the legislature, and few statutes enacted —where the nation was less governed by laws than by customs, which allowed much latitude of interpretation—the county-courts where all the freeholders were admitted, and which regulated the daily occurrences of life, formed a wide basis for freedom.

The criminal laws of the Anglo-Saxons, as of most barbarous nations, were far from being severe; a compensation in money being deemed sufficient for murder of any species, and for the lives of persons of any rank, including the king and the primate, whose head, by the laws of Kent, was estimated at a higher rate than that of the king. The prices of all kinds of wounds were also settled: and he who was detected in adultery with his neighbour's wife, was ordered, by the laws of Ethelbert, to pay him a fine, and buy him another wife. The punishments for robbery were various, but none of them capital. If any person could trace his stolen cattle into another's ground, the owner of the ground was obliged to show their tracks out of it, or pay the value of the cattle[4].

But, if the punishments for crimes among the Anglo-

3 Hickes' *Dissert.* Epist. ii—viii.

4 *Anglo-Saxon Laws*, published by Wilkins.

Saxons were remarkable, their pretended proofs were no less so. When any controversy about a fact was too intricate for the ignorant judges to unravel, they had recourse to what they called the judgement of God, or, in other words, to chance. Their modes of consulting that blind divinity were various; but the most common was the ordeal. This method of trial was practised either by boiling water or red-hot iron. The water, or iron, was consecrated by prayers, masses, fastings, and exorcisms; after which the person accused either took up with his bare hand a stone sunk in the water to a certain depth, or carried the iron to a particular distance. The hand was immediately wrapped up, and the covering sealed for three days; and if, on examining it, there appeared no marks of burning or scalding, the person accused was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, he was declared guilty[5]. The same kinds of proof, or others equally extravagant, prevailed among all the nations of the continent; and money, in like manner, was everywhere the atonement for guilt, both in a civil and ecclesiastical sense.

5 Spelman, in Verb. *Ordeal.*

LETTER IX.

Of the Reign of Charle-magne, or Charles the Great, King of France, and Emperor of the West.

CHARLES and Carloman, the successors of Pepin in the French monarchy, were men of very different dispositions. Charles was open and generous, Carloman dark and suspicious: it was therefore happy for mankind that Carloman died soon after his father, as intestine wars might have continually resulted from the opposite tempers and interfering interests of the brothers. Now alone at the head of a powerful kingdom, the great and ambitious

A.D. 770.

genius of Charles soon gave birth to projects which will render his name immortal. A prosperous reign of forty-five years, abounding with military enterprises, political institutions, and literary foundations, offers to our view, in the midst of barbarism, a spectacle worthy of more polished ages.

But, before I proceed to the history of this illustrious reign, I must say a few words of the state of Germany at that time.

Germany was formerly possessed by a number of free and independent nations, who bravely defended their liberties against the Romans, and were never totally subjected by them. On the decline of the Roman empire, many of those nations left their country, and founded empires or principalities in other parts; so that Germany, at the accession of Charle-magne to the crown of France, was principally occupied by the Saxons. Of their government I have already spoken. They were still Pagans. What was then considered as their territory comprehended a vast tract of country, extending from Bohemia to the Baltic and the German ocean. This spacious empire was governed by many independent princes, and inhabited by various tribes, who had become tributary to the French crown. But, whenever the throne of France was vacated by death, or when the kings were engaged either in foreign or domestic wars, the Saxon princes threw off their allegiance, and entered the French territories[1]. Charles had occasion to quell one of these revolts immediately after the death of his brother; and the work was but imperfectly executed, when his arms were wanted in another quarter.

The two brothers are said to have married two daugters of Didier or Desiderius, king of the Lombards; but this point is doubtful with regard to Carloman. Charles had divorced his consort, under pretence that she was incapable of bearing children, and married Hildegarda, a

1 Eginhardi *Vit. Car. Mag.*

Suabian princess. Bertha, the widow of Carloman, not thinking herself and her children safe in France after the death of her husband, retired into Italy, and implored the protection of Desiderius, who received her with joy. Highly incensed against Charles for divorcing his daughter, he hoped by means of these refugees to raise such disturbances in France as might both gratify his revenge, and prevent the French monarch from intermeddling in the affairs of Italy. In this hope he was encouraged by his intimacy with pope Adrian I. to whom he proposed

A.D. 772.

the crowning and anointing of Carloman's two sons. But Adrian, though disposed to oblige him, refused to comply with the request, as he apprehended that by such conduct he might incur the displeasure of Charles, the natural ally of the church, and the only prince capable of protecting him against his ambitious enemies. Enraged at the refusal, Desiderius ravaged the papal territories, or, as they were called, the *Patrimony of St. Peter*, and threatened to besiege Rome itself. To avert the pressing danger, Adrian privately sent ambassadors to Charlemagne, not only entreating his aid, but inviting him to the conquest of Italy, his friendship for Desiderius being now converted into the most rancorous hatred. The French monarch, who only waited an opportunity to revenge himself on that prince for keeping his nephews, and still more for wishing to crown them, received the pope's invitation with great satisfaction. He immediately left Germany, after a hasty accommodation with the Saxons, and collected such an army as evidently showed that his object was nothing less than the extinction of the kingdom of the Lombards[2].

Desiderius now put himself at the head of a great army, and sent troops to guard the passes of the Alps. But Charle-magne, apprised of this precaution, sent a detachment under experienced guides to cross the mountains by

2 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.*—Anast. *Vit. Hadriani.*

a different route. The French completed their march; and, falling unexpectedly upon the Lombards who guarded the passes, struck them with such terror, that they fled in the utmost confusion. Charles now entered Italy unmolested, and marched in quest of Desiderius. Unable to keep the field, the king of the Lombards retired to his capital; sending his son Adalgisus, as well as Bertha and her two sons, to Verona. A.D. 773.

As soon as Charle-magne understood that Desiderius had taken shelter in Pavia, he assembled his whole army, and laid siege to that city, resolving not to withdraw his forces till it should have submitted; but, as the Lombards made a gallant defence, he changed the siege into a blockade, and marched with part of his troops to invest Verona. Adalgisus defended the place, for a time, with great bravery; but, when he was reduced to extremities, he secretly withdrew, and fled to Constantinople, where he was cordially received by the emperor. Verona now surrendered to Charles, who, having seised Bertha and her sons, sent them under a strong guard into France. What afterwards became of them, history has not informed us. It is much to be feared, however, that their fate was little to the honour of the conqueror. Humanity was not the characteristic of those times.

The siege of Pavia was renewed, and pushed with fresh vigour; but, before the reduction of the town, Charles repaired to Rome. The pope received his deliverer in the most pompous manner, the magistrates and judges walking before him with their banners, and the clergy repeating, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name "of the Lord!" After Charles had satisfied his curiosity, and confirmed the donation which his father had made to St. Peter, he returned to the camp before Pavia. The Lombards continued to defend that city with obstinate valour; but, a plague breaking out among the besieged, the unfortunate Desiderius was obliged at last to surrender his A.D. 774.

capital, and deliver up himself, his wife, and his children, to Charles, who sent them all into France, where they either died a violent death, or languished out their days in obscurity[3].

Thus ended the kingdom of the Lombards in Italy, after it had subsisted two hundred and six years. They are represented by the monkish historians as a cruel and barbarous people, because they opposed the ambitious views of the popes; but the salutary laws which they left behind them, and which devouring time has still spared, are convincing proofs of their justice, humanity, and wisdom.

Of the state of Italy, at that time, it is proper that I should give you a sketch. It was then shared by the Venetians, the Lombards, the pope, and the emperor of the East. The Venetians had become very considerable by their trade to the Levant, and bore no small sway in the affairs of Italy, though they had a very small portion of territory on the continent. The pope was master of the exarchate and Pentapolis; the dukedom of Naples, and some cities in the two Calabrian provinces, were ruled by the emperor of the East. The other parts of Italy belonged to the Lombards; namely, the dukedoms of Friuli, Spoleto, and Benevento, together with the provinces of Liguria, Venetia, Tuscany, and the Alpes Cottiæ, which were properly called the kingdom of the Lombards. These Charles claimed by right of conquest, and caused himself, in imitation of their princes, to be crowned king of Italy, with an iron crown, which is still preserved in the little town of Monza.

The conqueror thought it necessary to settle the government of his new kingdom, before he left Italy; and, after consulting with the pope, he agreed that the people should be permitted to live under their former laws, and that all things should remain as established by his predecessors. Accordingly he allowed the dukes of Friuli, Spoleto, and

3 Leonis Ostiens. *Hist.*

Benevento, the same authority which they had enjoyed under the Lombard kings. He also permitted the other dukes to hold their dukedoms, contenting himself with an oath of allegiance, which he obliged them, as well as the three great dukes, to take annually. It was conceived in these words: "I promise, without fraud or deceit, to be "faithful to my sovereign Charles, and his sons, as long "as I live: and I swear, by these holy Gospels, that I will "be faithful to him, as a vassal to his lord and sovereign; "neither will I divulge any thing which, in virtue of my "allegiance, he shall commit to me." He never transferred a dukedom from one family to another, unless when the duke broke his oath, or died without male issue. This translation from one to another was called *investiture*; and hence it came, that fiefs were not granted but by investiture[4].

Charles committed the boundaries of his new kingdom, and the territory of cities, to the care of counts, who were invested with great authority. These boundaries were called *Marches*, and those who had the care of them were styled Counts of the Marches, or Marquises; whence the title of Marquis had its rise. He also occasionally sent commissaries, who were entrusted with higher powers, and examined the conduct of the counts, whose province it was to administer justice over all his dominions.

That Italy might retain at least some shadow of liberty, he convoked, as often as he returned to that country, a general assembly of the bishops, abbots, and barons, in order to settle affairs of national importance. The Lombards had but one order in their councils, that of the barons; but, as the French had two (the clergy and nobility), he added, in Italy, the order of ecclesiastics to that of the nobles[5].

The affairs of Italy being thus settled, Charles returned to France, and marched immediately against the Saxons, who had again revolted during his absence. A. D. 775.

4 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.* 5 Sigon.

But a detail of his wars with that barbarous though brave people, which continued during the greater part of his reign, can afford little pleasure to a humanised mind. I shall therefore only observe, that, after a number of battles gallantly fought, and many cruelties committed on both sides, the Saxons were totally subjected, and Germany became part of the empire of Charle-magne. A desire of converting the Saxons to Christianity seems to have been one of the principal motives for prosecuting this conquest; and, as they were no less tenacious of their religion than of their liberty, persecution marched in the train of war, and stained with blood the fetters of slavery.

Witikind, so deservedly celebrated by his nation, was the most eminent Saxon general during these hostilities. He frequently roused the drooping valour of his countrymen, and revived in their hearts the love of liberty and independence. They requited his gallant exertions with zeal and attachment, for which, however, they severely suffered. After an unsuccessful revolt, when they went to make submission to Charle-magne, he ordered four thousand five hundred of their principal men to be massacred, because they refused to deliver up their general[6]. An equal instance of severity is scarcely to be found in the history of mankind; especially if we consider, that the Saxons were not the natural subjects of Charles, but an independent people struggling for freedom. Witikind at last submitted, and embraced Christianity, continuing ever after faithful to his engagements. But he could never inspire his associates with the same docile sentiments: they were continually revolting; and submitting, that they might have it in their power to revolt again. On the final reduction of their country, the more resolute spirits retired into the northernmost parts of Europe, carrying with them their vindictive hatred to the dominion and the religion of France.

On the subject of religion it may here be observed, that

6 Eginhardi *Annal.*

Charle-magne justly considered the mild doctrines of Christianity as the best means of taming a savage people: but he erred in supposing that force would ever make Christians. His Capitulars or ordinances for the Saxons were almost as barbarous as their manners. He obliged them under pain of death, to receive baptism; he condemned to the severest punishments the breakers of Lent; in a word, he every where substituted force for persuasion. Instead therefore of blaming the obstinacy of these barbarians, we ought to be filled with horror at the cruel bigotry of the conqueror.

Almost every year of the reign was signalised by some military expedition, though very different from those of our times. War was then carried on without any settled plan of operations. The troops were neither regularly disciplined nor paid. Every nobleman led forth his vassals, who were only obliged to serve for a certain time; so that there was a kind of necessity for concluding the war with the campaign. The army was dissolved on the approach of winter, and assembled in the next season, if necessary. Hence we are enabled to account for some circumstances which would otherwise appear inexplicable, in the reign of this great prince.

Besides the Lombards and Saxons, whom he conquered, Charles vanquished in several engagements the Abares or Huns, plundered their capital, and penetrated as far as Raab on the Danube. He likewise made an expedition into Spain, and carried his arms to the banks of the Ebro[7].

Abdarrahman, the Moorish king, whom I have already mentioned, still reigned with lustre at Cordova. A superb mosque, now the cathedral of that city, six hundred feet in length, and two hundred and fifty in breadth, supported by three hundred and sixty-five columns of alabaster, jasper, and black marble, continues to manifest the grandeur of this monarch. No other people but the Arabs could then

7 Eginhardi *Annal.*

either have conceived or executed such a work. The little Christian king of the Asturias had prudently sued for peace from Abdarrahman; but some of the Moorish governors, having revolted from that prince, offered to acknowledge Charle-magne as their sovereign. Willing to extend his empire on that side, Charles crossed the
A. D. 778. Pyrenées with all expedition, took Pampeluna and Saragossa, and re-established the Moorish governors under his protection. In re-passing the mountains, his rear-guard was defeated by the duke of Gascony, at Roncevaux[8]. Here fell the famous Roland, so much celebrated in romance, and represented as nephew to Charle-magne; though history only tells us that he commanded on the frontiers of Bretagne.

Charles, though engaged in so many wars, was far from neglecting the arts of peace, the happiness of his subjects, or the cultivation of his own mind. Government, manners, religion, and letters, were his constant pursuits. He frequently convened the national assemblies, for regulating the affairs both of church and state. In these assemblies he proposed such laws as he considered to be of public benefit, and allowed the same liberty to others; but of this liberty, indeed, it would have been difficult to deprive the French nobles, who had been accustomed, from the foundation of the monarchy, to share the legislation with their sovereign. His attention extended even to the most distant corner of his empire, and to all ranks of men. Sensible how much mankind in general reverence old customs, and those constitutions under which they have lived from their youth, he permitted the inhabitants of all the countries that he conquered to retain their own laws, making only such alterations as he judged absolutely necessary for the good of the community. He manifested a particular regard for the common people, and studied their ease and advantage. This benevolence of mind, which can never be sufficiently admired, was both more

8 Eginhardi *Annal.*

necessary and more meritorious in those times, as the commonalty were then in a state of almost universal oppression, and were scarcely thought to be entitled to the sympathies of humanity. The same love of mankind led him to repair and form public roads; to build bridges, where necessary; to make rivers navigable, for the purposes of commerce; and to project that grand canal which would have opened a communication between the German Ocean and the Black Sea, by uniting the Danube and the Rhine[9]. This illustrious project failed in the execution, for want of those machines which art has since constructed. But the greatness of the conception, and the honour of having attempted it, were beyond the power of contingencies; and posterity has done justice to the memory of Charles, by considering him, on account of that and his other public-spirited plans, as one of those few conquerors who did not merely desolate the earth; as a hero truly worthy of the name, who sought to unite his own glory with the welfare of his species.

This great prince was no less amiable in private life than illustrious in his public character. He was an affectionate father, a fond husband, and a generous friend. His house was a model of œconomy, and his person of simplicity and true grandeur. "For shame!" said he to some of his nobles, who were more finely dressed than the occasion required; "learn to dress like men, and let the "world judge of your rank by your merit, not your habit. "Leave silks and finery to women, or reserve them for those "days of pomp and ceremony when robes are worn for "show, not use." On some occasions he himself appeared in imperial magnificence, and freely indulged in every luxury; but in general his dress was plain, and his table frugal. His only excess was in the pleasure of the sexes; and this he sometimes carried to such a height as to endanger his very athletic constitution, he being almost

9 Egin. *Vit. Car. Mag.*

seven feet high, and proportionably strong. He had his set hours for study, which he seldom omitted, either in the camp or the court; and, notwithstanding his continual wars, and unremitted attention to the affairs of a great empire, he found leisure to collect the old French poems and historical ballads, with a view to illustrate the history of the monarchy. The loss of this collection is much to be lamented, and could never have happened if every one had been as well acquainted with its importance as Charles. But he was the phœnix of his age; and, though not altogether free from its prejudices, his liberal and comprehensive mind, which examined every thing, and yet found time for all things, would have done honour to the most enlightened period. He was fond of the company of learned men, and assembled them from all parts of Europe, forming in his palace a kind of academy, of which he condescended to become a member. He also established schools, in the cathedrals and principal abbeys, for teaching writing, arithmetic, grammar, and church music[10]; certainly no very elevated sciences, yet considerable at a time when many dignified ecclesiastics could not subscribe the canons of those councils in which they sat as members, and when it was deemed a sufficient qualification for a priest to be able to read the Gospels and understand the Lord's Prayer[11].

Alcuin, our learned countryman, was the companion and particular favourite of Charle-magne, and was at the head of his Royal Academy. A circumstance so much to the honour of this island should not be omitted by a British historian. Three rich abbeys were the reward of the learning and talents of Alcuin. This benevolence has been thought to border on profusion; but in that age of darkness, when even an enthusiastic zeal for learning was a virtue, no encouragement could be too great for the illuminators of the human mind.

10 Egin. *Vit. Car. Mag.* 11 Reg. Brumiens. apud Bruck. *Hist. Philos.*

Had the religious enthusiasm of this monarch been attended with no worse consequences than his literary ardour, his piety would have been as deservedly admired as his taste. But a blind zeal for the propagation of Christianity, which extinguished his natural feelings, made him guilty of severities that shock humanity; and a superstitious attachment to the see of Rome, which mingled itself with his policy, led him to engage in theological disputes and quibbles unworthy of his character. Only the honours which his father and himself owed to the popes, can render him in any degree excusable. But, although the theological part of Charles's character is by no means the brightest, it merits your attention, as it serves to show the prejudices of the age, the littlenesses of a great man, and the great effects that frequently proceed from little causes.

As Charle-magne was equally a friend to religion and letters, and as any learning which yet remained among mankind, in our quarter of the globe, was monopolised by the clergy, it is not surprising that they obtained strong marks of his favour. Even the payment of tithes, then considered as a grievous oppression, but which he ordered as a compensation for the lands with-holden from the church; and the consequence which he gave to church-men, by admitting them into the national assemblies, and associating them with the counts in the administration of justice; appear less extravagant than his sitting in councils merely ecclesiastical, assembled about the most frivolous points of a vain theology. But, like some princes of later times, Charles seems to have been strongly desirous of being considered not only as the protector, but as the head of the church; and, from the imposing effect of his power and munificence, this usurpation was overlooked, notwithstanding the height which the papal dignity had then attained. We accordingly find him seated on a throne in the council of Frankfort, with one of the pope's legates on each hand, and three hundred bishops waiting his nod. A.D. 794.

The purpose of that council was to examine the doctrine of two Spanish bishops, who, in order to refute the accusation of polytheism, brought against the Christians by the Jews and Mohammedans, maintained that Jesus Christ was the son of God only by adoption. The king opened the assembly himself, and proposed the condemnation of this heresy. The council decided conformably to his will: and in a letter to the churches of Spain, in consequence of that decision, Charles expressed himself in these remarkable words: "You entreat me to judge of myself: I have done "so: I have assisted as an auditor, and an arbiter, in an "assembly of bishops: we have examined, and, by the "grace of God, we have settled, what must be believed!" Neither Constantine nor any other of the Greek emperors, so jealous of their theological prerogative, ever used a more positive language.

Charle-magne went still farther in the question of images. Leo IV., the son of Constantine Copronymus, as zealous an image-breaker as his father, had banished his wife Irenè, because she hid images beneath her pillow. This devout and ambitious princess coming afterwards to the government, during the minority of her son Constantine Porphyrogeneta, with whom she was associated in the empire, re-established that worship which she loved, from policy no less than piety. The second council of Nice accordingly decreed, that we ought to render to images an *honorary* worship, but not a real *adoration*, which is due to God alone. Unfortunately however, the translation of the acts of this council, which pope Adrian sent into France, was so incorrect, that the sense of the article relating to images was entirely perverted, running thus: "I receive and honour "images according to that adoration which I pay to the "Trinity." Charles was so much incensed at this impiety, that he composed, with the aid of the clergy, what are called the *Caroline Books*, in which the council of Nice is treated with the utmost contempt and abuse. He sent those

books to Adrian, desiring him to excommunicate the empress and her son. The pope prudently excused himself on the score of images, making Charles sensible of the mistake upon which he had proceeded; but he insinuated at the same time, that he would declare Irenè and Constantine heretics, unless they should restore certain lands which had belonged to the church; artfully hinting at certain projects which he had formed for the *exaltation* of the Romish church and the French monarchy[12]. The exaltation of the monarchy was approaching, though Adrian did not live to be the instrument of it.

Leo III., who succeeded Adrian in the papacy, sent to Charle-magne the standard of Rome, requesting him to send some person to receive the oath of fidelity from the Romans[13]; a most flattering instance of submission, as well as a proof that the sovereignty of Rome, at that time, belonged to the kings of France. Three years after, Pascal and Campule, two relatives of the late pope, not only offered themselves as accusers of Leo, but attacked him in the public streets, and severely wounded him. He made his escape by the assistance of some friends, and the duke of Spoleto, general of the French forces, sent him under an escort to Charle-magne. The king received him with great respect, sent him back with a numerous retinue, and went soon after to Italy to do him justice. A. D. 796.

At Rome, Charles passed six days in private conferences with the pope; after which he convoked the bishops and nobles, to examine the accusation brought against the pontiff. "The apostolic see," exclaimed the bishops, "cannot be judged by man!" Leo, however, spoke to the accusation: he said that the king came to *know the cause*; and no proof appearing against him, he purged himself by oath[14]. A. D. 800.

The trial of a pope was doubtless an uncommon scene;

12 *Elémens d'Hist. Gén.* par M. l'Abbé Millot, par. II. tome

13 Egin. *Vit. Car. Mag.* 14 Anast. *Vit. Leon.*

but one soon followed yet more extraordinary. On Christmas-day, as the king assisted at mass in St. Peter's church, in the midst of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and while he was on his knees before the altar, the supreme pontiff advanced, and put an imperial crown upon his head. As soon as the people perceived it, they cried "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by the hand of God! —Long live the great and pious emperor of the Romans!" The pope then conducted him to a magnificent throne, which had been prepared for the occasion; and as soon as he was seated, paid him those honours which his predecessors had been accustomed to pay to the Roman emperors, declaring, that, instead of bearing the title of Patrician, he should henceforth be styled Emperor and Augustus. Leo now presented him with the imperial mantle; with which being invested, Charles returned amidst the acclamations of the multitude to his palace [15].

The pope had surely no right to proclaim an emperor but Charles was worthy of the imperial ensigns; and, although he cannot be properly ranked among the successors of Augustus, he is justly considered as the founder of the New Empire of the West.

Charle-magne was no sooner proclaimed emperor than his title was generally acknowledged; and he received several embassies, which must have given him high satisfaction, as they did equal honour to the prince and the man. Irenè, the most artful and ambitious woman of her time, who had deposed her son that she might reign alone, proposed marriage to the new emperor. This proposal was made with a view of securing her Italian dominions, which she was informed Charles intended to seize; and the matrimonial treaty was actually concluded, when Nicephorus, the patrician, conspired against her, banished her to the isle of Lesbos, and ascended the imperial throne. By a treaty be-

15 Anast.—Egin. *Ann.*

tween Charles and this prince, the limits of the two empires were settled; and Calabria, Sicily, the coast of Naples, Dalmatia, and Venice, were to continue under the dominion of the Greek emperor[16]. This treaty proves that the Venetians were not yet altogether independent; but they aspired at independence, and soon deservedly attained it. A.D. 802.

The renown of Charles extended even into Asia. He kept a correspondence with the famous Haroun Al-Rashid, one of those khalifs who contributed most to enlighten and polish the Arabs. This prince valued the friendship of Charle-magne above that of all other potentates; as a proof of which, he complimented him with an embassy soon after he was proclaimed emperor, and ceded to him—if not the lordship of Jerusalem, as some authors affirm—at least the holy places in that city, whither devotion already led a great number of Christians. Among the presents which the ambassadors of Al-Rashid brought into France was a striking clock, the first ever seen in that kingdom; for, notwithstanding the efforts of Charlemagne to enlighten his nation, his subjects were not equal to those of Haroun in knowledge, or in the arts, either liberal or mechanical. The Arabs might then have been preceptors to all Europe.

I must here say a few words of this surprising phænomenon.

The Abassides, having ascended the throne of Mohammed, transferred the seat of empire from Damascus to Cufa, and afterwards to Bagdad. Thither the khalif Al-Mansour attracted the arts and sciences. The Greeks had furnished ideas and communicated taste to their barbarous conquerors—a species of triumph reserved for civilised nations, even in a state of servitude. Al-Mohdi, successor of Al-Mansour, cultivated these precious seeds; and Al-Rashid, who was the son of Al-Mohdi, augmented their

16 Egin. *Vit. Car. Mag.*—Theoph. *Chronographia.*

fecundity by his knowledge and attention, being equally liberal and enlightened. Under Al-Mamoun, Al-Motasem, Al-Wathek, and their immediate successors, the sciences flourished still more; but, at length, dissensions and civil wars robbed the Arabs, in their turn, of the fruits of genius and the lights of learning, which are almost inseparable from public tranquillity.

In all nations the same revolutions are produced nearly by the same causes. Nothing merits your attention more in the study of history.

One of the principal causes of the fall of empires has ever been, but more especially in modern times, the error of dividing the same monarchy among different princes. The custom prevailed before the time of Charlemagne: he followed it by a testamentary division (A.D. 806.) of his dominions among his three sons, Charles, Pepin, and Louis. The particulars of this division are of little consequence, as only Louis survived his father. It is necessary, however, to observe, that the Italian provinces had been assigned to Pepin; a donation which was confirmed to his son Bernard, with the title of King of Italy, and proved the ruin of that prince, as well as the cause of much disturbance to the empire.

In the mean time, the emperor was threatened by a new enemy, and the most formidable he had ever encountered. The Normans, as the French call them, or the inhabitants of the great northern peninsula of Europe (of whom I shall afterwards more particularly treat), had long harassed the coasts of his extensive dominions with their robberies and piracies; and, notwithstanding the wise measures of Charles, who created a powerful marine, and took every other precaution against their ravages, they not only continued their depredations, but made a formal descent in Friseland, under Godfrey the Dane. Charles assembled (A.D. 810.) all his forces in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, and was preparing for a decisive battle, which

might perhaps have terminated the empire of the Franks, as Godfrey was not inferior to the emperor either in valour or military skill, and had a numerous body of fearless adventurers under his command. But the issue of this battle was prevented by the death of that prince, who was assassinated by one of his followers. His forces were immediately re-embarked; and a peace was afterwards concluded with his nephew.

The satisfaction which Charles must have received from this deliverance, and the general tranquillity which he now enjoyed, were more than balanced by his domestic misfortunes. He lost his favourite daughter Rotrude, and two of his sons. Soon after the death of his son Charles, he associated Louis with him in the empire. The ceremony was very solemn. As if this great man had foreseen the usurpations of the church, he placed the imperial crown upon the altar, and ordered the prince to put it on his own head [17]; intimating thereby, that he held it only of God. A.D. 813.

The emperor died at Aix-la-Chapelle, his usual residence, in the seventy-second year of his age, and the forty-sixth of his reign. The glory of the French empire seemed to expire with him. He possessed all France, the greater part of Germany, a part of Spain, the Low Countries, and the continent of Italy as far as Benevento. But, to govern such an extent of territory, a monarch must be endowed with the genius of a Charlemagne. Jan. 814.

17 Theogani *Vit. Ludovici Pii.*

LETTER X.

Of the Empire of Charle-magne and the Church, from the Accession of Louis the Debonnaire to the Death of Charles the Bald.

THE history of Europe, for several ages after the death of Charle-magne, is little more than a catalogue of crimes, and a register of the debasing effects of ignorance and superstition. His empire soon experienced the same fate with that of Alexander. It had quickly attained its height; and yet, while animated by the superior genius of Charles, it possessed a surprising degree of strength and harmony. But these not being natural to the feudal system, the discordant elements began to separate under his son Louis the Debonnaire (so called on account of the gentleness of his manners); and that vast body, no longer informed by the same spirit, was in a short time entirely dismembered.

Louis, though a prince of some abilities, was unable to support so great a weight of empire: and his piety and parental fondness, however amiable in themselves, enfeebled a character already too weak, and an authority never respected. He rendered himself odious to the clergy by attempting to reform certain abuses, without foreseeing that this powerful body would not pay the same submission which had been given to the superior capacity of his father. More religious than politic, he spent less time in settling the affairs of his empire than those of his soul, not considering that true religion consists in fulfilling the duties of our station, and that the practices of the cloister are improperly associated with the functions of the throne. But his greatest error was occasioned by his paternal affection, and a blind imitation of his father's example, in dividing his dominions among his children.

Three years after his accession to the throne, he admitted his eldest son Lothaire to a participation of the French and German territories, declared Pepin king of Aquitaine, and created Louis king of Bavaria [1]. A. D. 817.

Bernard, king of Italy, was offended at this division. He thought his right to the empire superior to the claim of Lothaire, as his father Pepin was elder brother to Louis. The primate of Milan and the bishop of Cremona encouraging his pretensions, he revolted, and levied war against his uncle, in contempt of the imperial authority, to which his crown was subject. Louis acted on this occasion with greater vigour than either his friends or his enemies expected: he immediately raised a powerful army, and was preparing to cross the Alps, when Bernard was abandoned by his troops. That unfortunate prince was made prisoner, and condemned to lose his head; but his uncle, by a singular kind of lenity, mitigated the sentence to the loss of his eyes. He died three days after the punishment was inflicted; and Louis, to prevent future troubles, ordered three natural sons of Charle-magne to be shut up in a convent [2]. A. D. 818.

In consequence of these rigours, the emperor was seised with keen remorse; accusing himself of the murder of his nephew, and of tyrannic cruelty to his brothers, inhumanly secluded from the world. He was encouraged by the monks in this melancholy humour; which at last grew to such a height, that he impeached himself in an assembly of the states, and begged the bishops to enjoin him public penance [3]. The clergy now sensible of his weakness, set no bounds to their usurpations. The popes thought they might do any thing under so pious a prince: they did not wait for the emperor's confirmation of their election, but immediately assumed the tiara, and were guilty of other

1 Nithard. *de Dissensionibus Filiorum Ludovici Pii.*
2 *Vit. Lud. Pii.* 3 *Vit. Lud. Pii.*

irregularities. The bishops exalted themselves above the throne, and the whole fraternity of the church claimed an exemption from all civil jurisdiction. Even the monks, while they pretended to renounce the world, seemed to aspire to the government of it.

Louis, by the advice of his ministers, who were desirous of diverting him from his monastic habits, had married a second wife, who was distinguished both by her mental and personal qualities. This princess brought him a son, afterwards known by the name of Charles the Bald, whose birth was the occasion of much joy, but proved the cause of many sorrows. She pressed her husband to put Charles on a footing with his other children, by a new division of his dominions. Lothaire, sensible of the wishes of his indulgent father, and prevailed on by the entreaties of this fond mother, consented to resign a part of his territories to Charles. But he soon repented of his too easy concession; and the three brothers, by a remarkable association, joined in a rebellion against their father[4].

A.D. 824.

A.D. 829.

These disorders were fostered by Walla, abbot of Corbie, a monk of high birth, who had formerly been in the confidence of Louis, but was now in disgrace. He declaimed against the court, and against the empress in particular, accusing her of an adulterous commerce with count Bernard, the prime minister. His schemes succeeded. The emperor was abandoned by his army, and made prisoner with his wife Judith, and her son Charles. The empress was shut up in a cloister, and Louis himself would have been obliged to take the monastic habit, had it not been supposed that he would make a voluntary resignation of his crown. He had the courage, however, to insist on the rectitude of his intentions, while he acknowledged his errors, and promised to act with greater circum-

A.D. 830.

4 Nithard, *de Dissens. Fil. Lud. Pii.*

spection in future. The nobility pitied their humbled sovereign; and by the intrigues of the monk Gondebaud, who sowed dissensions among the brothers, Louis was restored to his dignity, and seemingly reconciled with his family[5].

The first use that the emperor made of his liberty was to recall his consort to court, though not without the permission of the pope, as she had formally taken the veil. Bernard was also recalled, and Walla banished: yet Louis did not long enjoy either peace or tranquillity. The monk Gondebaud thought he had a right to be prime minister, as the reward of his services: and, as women generally repay flattery with favour, they as generally reserve vengeance for insult; the empress brought her animosities to court with her. Walla's friends were persecuted, and Lothaire was deprived of the title of emperor, that the succession might be reserved for young Charles. The three brothers now formed a new league against their father[6]. Count Bernard, dissatisfied with his master's conduct, joined the rebels; and Gregory IV., then pope, went to France in the army of Lothaire, under pretence of accommodating matters, but really with an intention of employing against the emperor that power which he derived from him, being pleased with the opportunity of asserting the supremacy and independence of the holy see.

A. D. 832.

The presence of the pope, in those days of superstition, was of itself sufficient to determine the fate of Louis. After a deceitful negotiation, and an interview with Gregory on the part of Lothaire, the unfortunate emperor found himself at the mercy of his rebellious sons. He was deposed in a tumultuous assembly, and Lothaire was proclaimed in his stead[7]. After that infamous transaction the pope returned to Rome.

A. D. 833.

5 *Vit. Lud. Pii.* 6 Nithard. *de Dissens. Fil. Lud. Pii.*
7 *Vit. Lud. Pii.*

In order to give permanency to this revolution, as well as to apologise for their own conduct, the bishops of Lothaire's faction had recourse to an artifice like that which had been used for the degradation of king Wamba in Spain. "A penitent," said they, "is incapable of all civil "offices; a royal penitent must therefore be incapable of "reigning; let us subject Louis to a perpetual penance, "and he can never re-ascend the throne." He was accordingly arraigned in the assembly of the states, by Ebbo, archbishop of Rheims (who had been raised by his bounty from the condition of a slave), and condemned to do penance for life[8].

Louis was then prisoner in a monastery at Soissons; and, being much intimidated, he patiently submitted to a ceremony no less solemn than debasing. He prostrated himself on a hair-cloth, which was spread before the altar, and owned himself guilty of the charges brought against him, in the presence of many bishops, canons, and monks; Lothaire being also present, in order to enjoy the sight of his father's humiliation. But this acknowledgement was not deemed sufficient: he was obliged to read aloud a written confession, in which he was made to accuse himself of sacrilege and murder, and to number among his crimes the marching of troops in Lent, calling an assembly on Holy-Thursday, and taking arms to defend himself against his rebellious children!—for superstition can transform into crimes the most innocent and even the most necessary actions. After having finished his confession, this unhappy prince, by order of the ungrateful archbishop, laid aside his sword and belt, divested himself of the royal robes, put on the penitential sackcloth, and had a cell assigned to him.

But the feelings of nature, and the voice of humanity, prevailed over the prejudices of the age, and the policy of

8 *Vit. Lud. Pii.*

the clergy. Lothaire became an object of general abhorrence, and his father of compassion: his two brothers united against him, in behalf of that father whom they had contributed to humble. The nobility returned to their obedience: they paid homage to Louis, as their lawful sovereign; and the ambitious Lothaire was obliged to crave mercy, in the sight of the whole army, at the feet of a parent, and an emperor, whom he had lately insulted in the habit of a penitent[9]. He received it, and was permitted to retain the kingdom of Italy, which he had enjoyed from the time of Bernard's death. A. D. 834.

Louis immediately demanded absolution (such was his weakness!), and, in a general assembly at Thionville, he was formally restored to his dignity. He might now have ended his days in peace, but for the intrigues of Judith, who, still ambitious of the aggrandisement of her son, again entered into a negotiation with Lothaire, in consequence of the death of his brother Pepin. An assembly was convoked at Worms, to which he was invited. His father received him kindly; the empress loaded him with caresses. The kingdom of Neustria[10] had lately been added to the dominions of her son; and her present object was, to engage Lothaire in a scheme by which Charles should also become possessed of Aquitaine, at the expense of Pepin's children. Lothaire assented to what he was not in a condition to dispute. But Louis, king of Bavaria, though not injured by this new division of the empire, was so much incensed at its supposed injustice, that he assembled the whole force of his dominions. His father marched against him, but became suddenly indisposed; and, an eclipse of the sun happening at the same time, the superstitious old man had the vanity to think that Heaven had taken the trouble to foretell to mankind the death of a prince whose very virtues seemed almost to dishonour the throne, and A D. 839.

9 Nithard. *de Dissens. Fil. Lud. Pii.*

10 The north-western part of France, including Paris, was so called.

who ought never to have stirred beyond the walls of a cloister. He therefore repeatedly received the communion, and scarcely took any other nourishment, till his piety fulfilled the prediction which his folly had suggested[11].

June 840. Louis died near Mentz, in the sixty-fourth year of his age and the twenty-seventh of his reign. He left a crown, a sword, and a very rich sceptre, to Lothaire, by which it was supposed he also left him the empire, on condition that he should fulfil his engagements to Judith and Charles. The bishop of Metz, observing that he had left nothing to his son Louis, then in arms against him, reminded him that forgiveness at least was his duty. "Yes, "I forgive him!" cried the dying prince, with great emotion; "but tell him from me, that he ought to seek for- "giveness of God, for bringing my grey hairs in sorrow "to the grave."

A bad son, my dear Philip, cannot be expected to make a good brother; for the natural feelings in the second relation are necessarily weaker than in the first; you will not, therefore, be surprised to find the sons of Louis the Debonnaire armed against each other. No sooner was Lothaire informed of his father's death than he considered himself as emperor in the most extensive sense of the word, and resolved to make himself master of the whole imperial dominions, regardless of his engagements in favour of Charles the Bald, or the right of his brother Louis to the kingdom of Bavaria. And he seemed likely to attain the object of his ambition. He was a prince of great subtlety and address, could wear the complexion of the times, and was possessed of an extensive territory, beside the title of emperor, which was still much respected; he therefore assured himself of success against his brothers: Charles being only a youth of seventeen, under the tuition of his mother, and Louis a prince of no high reputation. He was deceived, however, in his conjectures. These two princes, united by

11 *Vit. Lud. Pii.*

a sense of common interest, gave him battle at Fontenai, in Burgundy, where fraternal hatred appeared in all its horrors. Few engagements have been so bloody, if (as it is said) 100,000 men fell on the spot. Lothaire and his nephew Pepin (who had joined him to assert his right to the crown of Aquitaine) were totally defeated[12]. Pepin fled to Aquitaine, and his uncle towards Italy, abandoning France to the victorious army. June 25, 841.

Nothing now remained for Louis and Charles but to secure their conquests. For this purpose they applied to the clergy; and with hopes the more flattering, as Lothaire, in order to raise troops with greater expedition, had promised the Saxons the liberty of renouncing Christianity, or, in other words, liberty of conscience, the very idea of which was abhorred by the church of Rome. Several bishops assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle; and, after examining the misconduct of the emperor, asked the two princes, whether they chose to follow his example, or govern according to the laws of God. Their answer may easily be imagined. "Receive then the kingdom by the divine authority," added the prelates: "we exhort you, we command you "to receive it[13]."

This command would have taken effect in its most comprehensive meaning, if Lothaire had respected it as much as his brothers. But that artful prince, by means of his indulgence to the Saxons, and other politic expedients, was enabled to procure a new army. He again became formidable. The two victorious princes, therefore, thought it adviseable to negotiate with him. By a new treaty of division, he was left in possession of the kingdom of Italy, with the imperial dignity, and the countries situated between the Rhône and the Alps, the Meuse and the Rhine. Charles retained Neustria and Aquitaine; and Louis, afterwards styled the German, had all the provinces on the

12 Nithard. *de Dissens. Fil. Lud. Pii.* 13 Nithard.—*Annal. Metens.*

other side of the Rhine, and some cities on this side of it[14].

The extinction of the civil war made but one evil less in the empire of Charle-magne, ravaged in different parts by the Normans, and by the Saracens, who pillaged Italy. The turbulent independence of the nobles, accustomed during the last reign to despise the prince and the laws—the discontents of the clergy—and the ambitious projects of both—were the sources of new troubles. Every thing threatened the most fatal revolutions; every thing tended to anarchy.

To lessen these evils, the three brothers entered into an association, the effect of weakness more than affection, by which the enemies of one were to be considered as the enemies of all (so low was the empire of the great Charles!); and, in an assembly at Mersen on the Meuse, they settled certain constitutions relative to the succession, and other public matters. By these it was established, that the children of the reigning prince, whether of age or under age, should succeed to his dominions, and owe nothing to the other princes of the monarchy but the respect due to the ties of blood[15]—a regulation well calculated to prevent civil wars, though it proved ineffectual in those disorderly times. But other constitutions of the same assembly tended to enfeeble the royal authority, which had already too much need of support. They imported, that the crown vassals should no longer be obliged to follow the king, unless in general wars, occasioned by foreign invasions; and that every free man should be at liberty to choose, whether he would be the vassal of the king or of a subject. The first of these regulations increased the independence of the crown vassals, and the second their power, by augmenting the number of their retainers; for many persons chose rather to depend upon some neigh-

A.D. 851.

14 Nithard. 15 *Annal. Bertinian.*

bouring nobleman, whose immediate protection they might claim (at a time when protection was necessary, independent of the laws), than on the sovereign, whose attention they had less reason to expect, and whose aid was more distant or doubtful.

Lothaire, some years after, took the habit of a monk, that, according to the language of those times, he might atone for his crimes, and, though he had lived a tyrant, die a saint. In this pious disguise he expired, before he had worn it for a week. He had divided his dominions among his three sons; and, by virtue of the treaty of Mersen, they quietly succeeded to their allotments. Sept. 855. Louis had Italy, with the title of emperor: Lothaire ruled over that country which from him received the appellation of the kingdom of Lotharingia, a more extensive territory than the subsequent Lorrain: Charles became king of Provence, and also governed the district since called Dauphiné, as well as a part of Burgundy. Unnecessarily increasing the number of kings, Charles the Bald, the uncle of these princes, declared his infant son king of Aquitaine[1].

Thus was the empire of Charle-magne weakened by subdivisions, till it became, to use the language of Shakspeare, only "a stage to feed contention on." Foreign invasions conspired with civil dissensions to spread terror and disorder in every quarter, but more especially through the dominions of Charles the Bald—a prince as weak as his father, and restless as his mother. The Normans carried fire and sword into the heart of his kingdom, to Rouen, and even to the gates of Paris. Young Pepin, son of the last king of Aquitaine, joined the invaders, and ravaged that country over which he had been born to reign. Nomenoge, duke of Bretagne, usurped the title of king, which Charles was obliged to confirm to his son Herispée, by whom he had

16 *Annal. Fuldens.*

been totally defeated. The spirit of revolt became every day more general. Some factious nobles invited Louis the German to usurp his brother's kingdom. He came at the head of a powerful army, and received the homage of the principal nobility. Venilon, archbishop of Sens, and other prelates of the party of Louis, at the same time declared that Charles had forfeited his dignity by mal-administration, and crowned his brother[17].

A. D. 858.

Charles, however, recovered his kingdom as quickly as he had lost it. The prelates, who were his friends, excommunicated those who had dethroned him; which brought the rebels into contempt and even abhorrence. Louis sent back his army into Germany, that he might not give umbrage to the French, and he was afterwards obliged to take the same route himself. Charles no sooner appeared than he was universally acknowledged: his restoration did not cost a single blow. The most terrible anathemas were now denounced against Louis by the French clergy, unless he should submit to the rigours of the church; and he was weak enough to reply, that he must first consult the bishops of his own kingdom[18].

The weakness of Charles the Bald was still more extraordinary. Having assembled a council to judge the traitor Venilon, he presented a memorial against him, in which is the following singular passage: "I ought not to have been "*deposed*, or at least not before I had been *judged* by the "*bishops*, who *gave* me the *royal authority!* I have always "*submitted* to their *correction*, and am ready now to *sub-* "*mit* to it!" Venilon escaped punishment by making his peace with the prince: and the bishops of the council bound themselves by a canon to remain united, "for the "*correction* of *kings*, the *nobility*, and the *people*[19]!"

Various circumstances show, that the clergy now aspired

17 *Annal. Bertinian.—Concil. Gal.* vol. ii.

18 *Annal. Bertin.*

19 *Concil. Gal.* vol. ii.—*Hist. Eccles. par* Fleury.

to the right of disposing of crowns, which they founded on the custom of anointing kings. They employed fictions and sophisms to render themselves independent; they refused the oath of fealty, "because sacred hands could not "without abomination, submit to hands impure[20]!" One usurpation led to another; abuse constituted right—a quibble appeared a divine law. Ignorance sanctified every thing; and we may safely conclude, from the abject language of Charles, in publicly acknowledging the right of the bishops to depose him, and other examples of a similar nature, that the usurpations of the clergy were in a great measure occasioned by the slavish superstition of the laity, equally blind, wicked, and devout.

The zeal of the bishops to establish their independence was favourable to the projects of the court of Rome. Sergius II. had taken possession of the apostolic see, in 844, without the approbation of Lothaire, then emperor; who, incensed at such an insult, sent his son Louis to Rome with troops and prelates. The pope, having conducted the prince to St. Peter's gate, said to him, "I permit you to "enter, if your intentions are good; if not, I will not suffer "you to enter!" and the French soldiers being guilty of some irregularities, he actually ordered the gates to be shut. Lothaire complained; Sergius was cited to appear before a council; he appeared, and justified himself in the eye of the priesthood[21]. Leo IV., celebrated for the courage with which he defended Rome against the Saracens, and Benedict III., elected in spite of the emperor, lived in peace with royalty; but Nicholas I., more bold than any of his predecessors, made himself the judge of kings and of bishops, and realized the chimera of lying decretals.

Before I adduce any instances of the spirit of pope Nicholas, I will take cursory notice of the story of a female who is said to have filled the papal chair between the pon-

20 *Hist. de l'Eglise Gallic.* 21 *Concil. Gal.* vol. ii.—Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*

tificates of Leo and Benedict. It has been affirmed, that a woman of English extraction, but of German birth, studied at Rome for some years in the disguise of a man; and, having acquired the reputation of an able theologian, was unanimously elected pontiff, in the year 855; that she governed the church above a twelvemonth; but, having been criminally connected with one of her domestics, felt the pains of child-birth in a public procession, and died soon after she had been delivered. This story does not appear to have been mentioned before the lapse of four centuries from the period to which it is assigned. It was obviously fabricated with a view of exposing the Romanists to ridicule and odium; and it is disbelieved by every man of candour and judgement.

A grand occasion offered in France for Nicholas to exercise that authority which he attributed to himself. A. D. 860. Lothaire, king of Lorrain, divorced his wife Theutberge on a charge of incest. She was cleared by the trial of boiling water, but afterwards convicted by her own confession—if an involuntary acknowledgement, the effect of violence and fear, can be called conviction. A council at Aix-la-Chapelle authorised Lothaire to A. D. 862. espouse Waldrade, a young lady whom he had seduced. The guilty individuals were equally desirous of this marriage; but the pope, affecting to be shocked at the criminal amour, endeavoured to force the king to take back his first wife. A. D. 863. For this purpose he ordered the bishops to hold a council at Metz with his legates, and to cite and judge Lothaire. They confirmed the divorce, contrary to the expectations of the pontiff—a decree which so much enraged him, that he deposed the bishops of Treves and Cologne, who had been appointed to present to him the acts of the council. These prelates complained to the emperor Louis II. He went immediately to Rome, displayed his authority, and seemed determined to repress the papal power. But he was seised

with an indisposition, and also with superstitious fears; and he retired, after having approved the conduct of Nicholas, who became still more imperious. Lothaire offered to justify himself in person before the pope; but his holiness insisted that Waldrade should first be dismissed; and a legate threatened the king with immediate excommunication, if he continued in disobedience. The intimidated prince now submitted; he recalled Theutberge, and even consented that the legate should lead Waldrade in triumph to Rome. She set out on that mortifying journey, but escaped by the way; and, in a short time, resumed her place both as mistress and queen. The unfortunate Theutberge, sinking beneath the weight of persecution and neglect, at last desired to be separated from Lothaire, protesting that her marriage was void, and that Waldrade's was legitimate. But nothing could move the inflexible Nicholas: he continued obstinate[22].

We may consider this pope as the forerunner of Gregory VII.; and, in the same circumstances, he would probably have carried his ambition to the same height. The bishops of Treves and Cologne accused him, in an invective, of making himself *emperor* of the whole world; and that expression, though somewhat strained, was not altogether without foundation. He asserted his dominion over the French clergy, by re-establishing Rothade of Soissons, who had been deposed by a provincial council; and he received appeals from all ecclesiastics dissatisfied with their bishops. By these means he accustomed the people to acknowledge a supreme tribunal at a distance from their own country, and consequently a foreign sway. He gave orders for the succession to the kingdom of Provence, which Charles the Bald disputed with the emperor Louis, brother to the deceased king. "Let no one pre- "vent the emperor," said he, in a letter on that subject, "from governing the kingdoms which he holds in virtue

22 Hincmar de *Divort. Lothar. et Theutberg.*

"of a succession confirmed by the holy see, and by the "crown which the sovereign pontiff has set upon his head."

Nicholas died in 867; but his principles had taken such deep root, that Adrian II., his successor, though more moderate, and desirous of peace, thought his condescension great in permitting the king of Lorrain to come to Rome, in order to justify himself, or do penance. Charles the Bald and Louis the German waited with impatience for the excommunication of their nephew, being persuaded that they should then have a right to seise his dominions. Thus the blind ambition of princes favoured the exercise of a power, which they ought to have foreseen might be turned against themselves; which afterwards became the scourge of royalty, and made every crowned head tremble.

A. D. 868.

Lothaire, while at Rome, employed all possible means to soften the pope; he received the communion from his hand, after having sworn that he had avoided all criminal commerce with Waldrade, since the prohibition of Nicholas, and never would have any in future. He soon after died at Placentia. His death was considered as a just vengeance, as a mark of the divine displeasure against perjury; and it rendered the proof by the eucharist still more important.

The emperor Louis II. ought legally to have succeeded to the dominions of the deceased king; but he being at that time employed in expelling the Saracens, who had invaded Italy, and consequently not in a condition to assert his right by arms, Charles the Bald seised the succession, and retained it notwithstanding the remonstrances of the pope. "The *arms* which God has put into our hand," said Adrian, "are prepared for his defence[23]!" Charles was more afraid of the arms of his brother the German, with whom he found it necessary to share the kingdom, though the nobility and clergy of Lorrain had voluntarily submitted to him.

23 *Epist. Adrian.*

The pope still continued his remonstrances in favour of the emperor, hoping at least to obtain something for him; but they were disregarded by the French king, who had now thrown off much of his piety, and answered in a spirited manner by the famous Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims. This bold and independent prelate desired the pope to call to mind that respect and submission which the ancient pontiffs had always paid to princes, and to reflect that his dignity gave him no right over the government of kingdoms; that he could not be at the same time pope and king; that the choice of a sovereign belongs to the people; that anathemas ill applied have no effect upon the soul; and that *free* men are not to be enslaved by a bishop of Rome[24].

Adrian affected to despise these arguments, and continued for some time his menaces, both against Hincmar and the king; but, finding them ineffectual, he changed his tone, and wrote several flattering letters to Charles, promising him the empire on the death of his nephew, then in a languishing condition. This project in favour of the French king was executed under John VIII., Adrian's successor. The emperor dying without male heirs, Louis the German claimed the succession, and the imperial dignity, as elder brother to Charles; but the pope preferred the claim of the latter for political reasons, which, with the court of Rome, never failed to take place of equity. Louis seemed approaching to his end, and had three sons, among whom his dominions would be divided. Charles was a younger man, and had only one son; he therefore appeared the most proper person to choose as a protector. He crossed the Alps at the head of his army, and accordingly received the imperial crown as a *present* from the pope; but nearly in the same manner that many presents of the like kind are obtained in our

A. D. 875.

24 Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*

A. D. 876. days, by paying a considerable sum for it. In an assembly at Pavia, the bishops, abbots, and Italian nobles, recognised him in the following words; "Since "the divine favour, through the merits of the holy "apostles, and of their vicar pope John, has raised you "to the empire, according to the judgement of the Holy "Ghost, we elect you unanimously for our protector and "lord[25]."

On the death of Louis the German, a prince of some merit both as a warrior and politician, Charles the Bald, always ambitious and imprudent, attempted to seise that part of Lorrain which he had granted to his brother, and was deservedly defeated[26]. His three nephews, Carloman, Louis, and Charles, preserved their possessions by maintaining a strict union among themselves. The first had Bavaria, the second Saxony, and the third Suabia.

The Saracens renewing their ravages in Italy, the pope had recourse to the new emperor; and desired him "to "remember the hand that had given him the empire, "lest," added he, "if driven to despair, we should change "our opinion!" This menace, sufficiently intelligible, had its effect. Though France was then over-run by the Normans, whom Charles was unable to resist, he undertook to expel the Saracens; and he had scarcely arrived in Italy, when he received intelligence of a new enemy. Carloman had advanced against him, with an intention of seising the imperial crown and the kingdom of Italy, in virtue of his father's will and the right of primogeniture. Oct. 877. Charles, betrayed by his nobles, retired with precipitation, and died in a miserable cottage, on Mont-Cenis, in the fifty-fifth year of his age[27].

An ordinance in the last year of his reign permitted the nobility to transmit their employments to their sons, or other male heirs. This privilege, extorted from the crown,

25 Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.* 26 *Annal. Fuldens.*
27 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.*—*Annal. Bertin.*

as I have already observed, was one of the principal sources of disorder in the feudal government: and tended, as we shall have occasion to see, to the abolition of all political subjection. In the mean time I must speak of a people who deserve your attention, no less on account of their manners than their warlike achievements.

LETTER XI.

Of the Normans or Danes, before their Settlement in France and England.

THE bravest and most liberal-minded of the Saxons, my dear Philip, on the final reduction of their country by Charle-magne, having fled from the dominion and persecutions of the conqueror into the ancient Scandinavia, or that part of Europe which comprehends the present kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, carried with them their vengeance and violent aversion against Christianity. There, meeting with men of dispositions similar to their own, and of the same religion with themselves, they were cordially received, and soon stimulated the natives to deeds of arms; to enterprises which at once promised revenge to the fugitives, and subsistence to the inhabitants of countries then overstocked with people.

In their various incursions on the continent, these ferocious adventurers were known by the general name of Normans, from their northern situation; and, in their attacks upon Britain, by the common appellation of Danes, to whatever country they might belong. They became the terror of all the maritime parts of Europe. But, before I speak of their depredations, I must say a few words of their religion and manners.

The manners of a people, and the popular superstition, depend on each other. Religion takes its complexion originally from the manners: men form a deity according to their own ideas, their prejudices, their passions; and the manners are, in a great measure, continued or altered by the established religion of any country, especially when it is calculated to affect the imagination. The religion of the ancient Scandinavians was highly so, and was preserved entire among the Normans, who also retained their unadulterated manners. They were worthy of each other: equally bloody and barbarous, but formed to inspire the most enthusiastic courage, and the most unremitted perseverance in toil. Odin, whom the Saxons called Woden, was their supreme divinity. They painted him as the god of *terror*—the author of *devastation*—the father of *carnage!*—and they worshipped him accordingly. They sacrificed to him, when they were successful, some of the captives taken in war; and they believed that those heroes would stand highest in his favour who had killed most enemies in the field; that, after death, the brave would be admitted into his palace, and there have the happiness of drinking ale (the favourite liquor of the northern nations) out of the skulls of their slaughtered foes[1].

In consequence of this belief, fatigues, wounds, combats, and perils, were the exercises of infancy and the sports of youth. They were forbidden to pronounce the word fear, even on the most trying occasions. Education, prejudice, manners, example, habit—all contributed to subdue in them the sensation of timidity; to make them covet danger, and seem greedy of death[2]. Military discipline was

1 See the *Edda*, or System of Runic Mythology. In that state of festivity the departed warriors were supposed to be served at table by beautiful virgins called Valker, who ministered to other pleasures beside those of the feast. (*Edda Mythol.* xxxi.) And war and arms, the delight of the Scandinavians in this life, were believed to be their amusement in another world. *Edda*, xxxv.

2 "The battle is as pleasing to me," says Lodbrog (who was a king and a warrior as well as a poet), "as the bed of a virgin in the glow of her charms, or the "kiss of a young widow in her most secret apartment." *Epiced.* Stroph. xiv.

only requisite to enable them to enslave the whole Christian world, then sinking under the weight of a debasing superstition, and cringing beneath the rod of priestly tyranny.

Though Charle-magne took many wise precautions against the Normans, he was not able wholly to prevent their irruptions, and was only freed by the death of their leader from a dangerous competition. Under Louis the Débonnaire, they threw all France into alarm; and, under Charles the Bald, they committed horrible devastations. Their fleets, which were composed of light barks, braved the storms of the ocean, and penetrated every creek and river; so that they landed sometimes on the coasts and sometimes in the interior parts of the kingdom. As the government took no effectual measures for repelling them, the unprotected people knew nothing but fear. Fire and sword, on all hands, marked the route of the ravagers. With their booty they carried off women, to whom they were much addicted, and boys to recruit their predatory bands. Their irruptions were renewed with alarming frequency. They repeatedly pillaged Rouen; they surprised and burned Paris; they laid waste Aquitaine and other provinces, and reduced the French king to the greatest distress.

Shut up at St. Denis, while his capital was in flames, Charles the Bald was no less anxious about saving his people than the reliques. Instead of encountering the enemy, he bought a peace; or, in other words, he furnished the Normans with the means, while he inspired them with the motive, of a new war. They returned accordingly; and Charles, to complete his disgrace, published, when going to assist the pope, in the last year of his reign, a capitular to regulate the contributions to be paid to the Normans [3].

England had also experienced a variety of calamities

3 *Capit. Caroli Calvi.*

from the incursions of these plunderers, when it found a protector in the great Alfred. But before I exhibit the exploits, or consider the institutions of that illustrious prince, we must take a view of the reigns of his predecessors from the end of the Saxon Heptarchy.

LETTER XII.

Of the Affairs of England, from the End of the Saxon Heptarchy to the Death of Alfred the Great.

A.D. 827. EGBERT, the founder of the English monarchy, was a prince of eminent abilities and great experience. He had enjoyed a considerable command in the armies of Charle-magne, by whom he was much respected, and had acted with success against the Normans and other enemies of the empire. After his return to Britain, he was engaged in a variety of contests with some of the contemporary princes before he obtained the supreme dominion; but, having surmounted those difficulties, he found himself without a rival. As he was the only remaining descendant of Cerdic, one of the first Saxon leaders who landed in this island, and who were all supposed to have sprung from Woden, the hero or the god, the people readily transferred their allegiance to a prince who appeared to merit it equally by his birth and talents. An union of government seemed to promise internal tranquillity; and the Saxons, from their insular situation and their power, had little reason to be afraid of foreign enemies. Egbert, therefore, flattered himself with the hopes of peace and security. But human foresight is very limited: a fleet of those northern adventurers, whom we have already seen ravaging France under the name of Normans, soon gave the English monarch reason to alter his opinion. They first

landed in the isle of Shepey, pillaged it, and carried off their booty with impunity. They soon returned in thirty-five ships. The king gave them battle at Charmouth in Dorsetshire; where they were worsted, A.D. 833. after an obstinate dispute, but made good their retreat to their ships. Now sensible what an enemy they had to deal with, they entered into an alliance with the Britons of Cornwall; and, landing in that country, they and their confederates rushed forward, till they were A.D. 835. met by Egbert at Hengesdown, and totally defeated[1]. But, while England was threatened with new alarms from the same quarter, this warlike monarch, who alone was able to oppose the invaders, unfortunately died, and left the kingdom to his son Ethelwolf, a prince A.D. 838. better fitted to wear the cowl than the crown.

Ethelwolf began his reign with dividing his dominions, according to the absurd custom of those times; delivering over to his eldest son Athelstan the counties of Essex, Kent, and Sussex. But no inconveniencies seem to have arisen from this partition, the terror of the Danish invaders preventing all domestic dissensions. Time proved that this terror was but too just. The Danes returned with redoubled fury; and, though often repulsed, and sometimes defeated, they always obtained their end, by committing plunder, and carrying off their booty. They avoided coming to a general engagement, which was not suited to their plan of operations. Their vessels, being small, ran easily up the creeks and rivers; they drew them ashore, and formed an entrenchment around them, leaving them under a guard. They scattered themselves over the face of the country in small parties, making spoil of every thing that came in their way—goods, cattle, and women. If opposed by a superior force, they retired to their vessels, set sail, and invaded some distant quarter not prepared for their reception. All England was kept in continual alarm; and

1 *Chron. Sax.*

the inhabitants of one part would not venture to assist another, lest their own families and possessions should be exposed to the fury of the ravagers. Every season of the year was alike: no man could be certain of a day's safety.

Encouraged by their past successes, the Danes at length landed in so large a body as seemed to threaten
A. D. 851. the whole island with subjection. But the Anglo-Saxons, though labouring under the weight of superstition, were still a gallant people: they roused themselves with a vigour proportioned to the necessity, and defeated their invaders in several engagements [2]. A body of Danes, however, now ventured, for the first time, to take up their winter-quarters in England; and other parties renewed their inhuman ravages.

The harassed state of his kingdom did not hinder Ethelwolf from making a pilgrimage to Rome. In his
A. D. 854. return, after a twelvemonth spent in devotions and benefactions to the see of Rome, he married Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald; and, soon after his arrival in England, he conferred a perpetual and very important donation on the church, by granting to the clergy
A. D. 855. a tenth out of all the produce of land. This enormous tax upon industry had been long claimed by the servants of the altar, as a perpetual property belonging to the priesthood—a jargon founded on the practice of the Jews. Charle-magne had ordered the tithe to be paid in consideration of the church-lands seised by the laity; but, in England, no such invasion had been made. The church enjoyed many lands, and was enriched by the continual oblations of the people: the English clergy, therefore, had not hitherto been able to obtain their demand. But an opportunity now offered itself, and religion furnished the motive; a weak and superstitious prince, and an ignorant people, dejected by their losses, and in terror of future in-

2 *Chron. Sax.*

vasions, eagerly adopted any means, however costly, of bribing the protection of Heaven [3].

After the death of Athelstan, Ethelbald, the king's second son, had formed the project of excluding his father from the throne. This unnatural attempt gave the pious monarch little concern. He complied with most of his son's demands, and the kingdom was divided between them. He lived only two years after his return to England, which he left by his will to be shared between Ethelbald and Ethelbert. A. D. 857.

Ethelbald was a profligate prince: but his reign was happily short; and his brother Ethelbert, succeeding to the government of the whole kingdom, conducted himself in a manner more suitable to his rank. A. D. 860. England was still infested by the depredations of the Danes, who, in his reign, sacked Winchester, but were there defeated.

Ethelbert was succeeded by his brother Ethelred, whose whole reign was one continued struggle with the Danes. A. D. 866. He defended his kingdom with much bravery, and was gallantly seconded in all his efforts by his younger brother Alfred, who, though excluded from a large inheritance left to him by his father, generously sacrificed his resentment to the public good. Ethelred died in the midst of these troubles, and left his disordered kingdom to Alfred. A. D. 871.

The new monarch was now twenty-two years of age, and a prince of very promising talents. He had no sooner buried his brother than he was obliged to take the field against the Danes. They had seised Wilton, and were ravaging the neighbouring country. He gave them battle, and at first gained some advantage over them; but, pursuing his victory too far, he was worsted by means of the enemy's numbers. The loss of the Danes, however, was so considerable, that, fearing Alfred might suddenly receive

3 Selden's *History of Tithes*, chapter viii.

reinforcements from his subjects, they stipulated for a safe retreat, under a promise of quitting Wessex. But they were no sooner freed from danger than they renewed their ravages. A new swarm of Danes landed, and Alfred, after various conflicts, again condescended to treat

A. D. 875. with them, and was again deceived. While he was expecting the execution of the agreement, another swarm from the northern hive landed on this island, and reduced the Saxons to despair. They believed themselves abandoned by Heaven, and devoted to destruction; since, after all their vigorous efforts, fresh invaders still poured in upon them, as greedy of spoil and slaughter as the former. Some left their country; others submitted to the conquerors; but none would listen to the exhortations of Alfred, who, still undismayed, begged them to make another effort in defence of their possessions, their liberties, and their prince[4].

A. D. 878. Thus abandoned by his subjects, this illustrious monarch relinquished, for a time, the ensigns of his dignity, and assumed the habit of a peasant. In that mean disguise he eluded the pursuit and the fury of his enemies; and, in order to save his country, he even condescended to live for some time as servant to a grazier. But the human mind is as little suited to employments beneath as above its capacity: the great Alfred made a bad cow-herd. His guardian genius was occupied with higher cares; and, as soon as he found that his enemies were more remiss in their search, he collected some of his adherents, and retired to a morass, formed by the stagnating waters of the Thone and Parret; where, finding some firm ground, he erected a small fortress. This place was called *Æthelinga-ige*, or the Isle of Nobles; and it now bears the name of Athelney. Here, for some months, Alfred lay concealed, but not inactive: he made occasional sallies upon the Danes, who often felt the vigour of his arm, but

4 *Chron. Sax.*—Alur. Beverl. *Annal.*

knew not whence the blow came, or by whom it was directed. At length a prosperous event emboldened the royal fugitive to leave his retreat, and enter on a scene of action more worthy of himself.

Oddune, governor of Devonshire, being besieged in his castle by Hubba, a celebrated Danish general, made an unexpected sally upon his adversaries, routed them, and pursued them with great slaughter; killed Hubba himself, and gained possession of the famous *Reafen*, or Raven, an enchanted standard, in which the Danes put great confidence [5]. Alfred hearing of this victory, was happy to find the seeds of valour beginning to revive among his subjects; but, before he would assemble them in arms, he resolved to inspect the situation of the enemy, and judge of the probability of success, as an unfortunate attempt in the present state of national despondency might be ruinous and fatal. In consequence of this resolution, he entered the Danish camp under the disguise of a harper, and passed unsuspected through every quarter. He observed the supine security of the ravagers, their contempt of the English, and their neglect of all military regulations. Encouraged by these propitious appearances, he sent secret intelligence to his most powerful subjects, and summoned them to attend with their vassals on the borders of Selwood forest. The English, who, instead of ending their calamities by submission, as they fondly hoped, had found the insolence and rapine of the conquerors more intolerable than the dangers and fatigues of war, joyfully resorted to the place of rendezvous. They saluted their beloved monarch with bursts of applause; they could not satiate their eyes with the sight of a prince whom they had believed dead, and who now appeared as their deliverer: they urged him to lead them to liberty and vengeance. Alfred did not suffer their ardour to cool: he conducted them instantly to Edington, where the Danes lay encamped; and,

5 *Chron. Sax.*—Abb. Rieval.

taking advantage of his previous knowledge of the enemy's situation, he directed his attack against the most unguarded quarter. Surprised to see an army of Englishmen, whom they considered as totally subdued, and still more to find Alfred at their head, the Danes made but a feeble resistance, notwithstanding their superior numbers. They were soon put to flight, and routed with great slaughter [6].

Alfred, no less generous than brave, and who knew as well how to govern as to conquer, took the surviving Danes, and their prince Guthrum or Gothrun, under his protection. He granted them their lives on submission, and liberty to settle in East-Anglia, on condition that they should embrace Christianity. Many consented, and were baptised: others passed over to the continent [7].

After this success, Alfred employed himself in establishing civil and military institutions; in composing the minds of men to industry and justice, and in providing against the return of like calamities. He rebuilt the towns which had been ruined by the Danes, and formed a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He took care that all his subjects should be armed and registered, and assigned to them a regular round of duty: he distributed one part into the castles and fortresses, which he erected in proper places; he appointed another to take the field on any alarm, and assemble at stated places of rendezvous; and he left a sufficient number at home, who were employed in the cultivation of the lands, and afterwards took their turn in military service. The whole kingdom was like one great garrison: the Danes, who occasionally re-appeared on the coasts, could no sooner land in any quarter than a sufficient force was ready to oppose them, without leaving the other parts naked or defenceless [8].

But Alfred did not trust solely to his land forces. He

6 *Chron. Sax.*—Sim. Dunelm.—Alur. Beverl.
7 Asserii *Annal.*—Hen. Huntingd.
8 Spelman's *Life of Alfred.*

may be deemed the creator of the English navy, as well as the establisher of the monarchy. Sensible that ships form the most natural bulwark of an island, a circumstance hitherto overlooked by the English (as the Saxons were now generally called), he provided himself with a naval force, and met the Danes on their own element. A hundred and twenty armed vessels were stationed upon the coasts; and being provided with warlike engines, and expert seamen, both Frisians and English, maintained a superiority over the enemy, and gave birth to that claim which England still supports—to the sovereignty of the ocean.

Thus did Alfred provide for the security of his kingdom; and the excellent posture of defence every-where established, together with the wisdom and valour of the prince, at length restored peace and tranquillity to England, and communicated to it a consequence hitherto unknown in the monarchy. But I should convey to you, my dear son, a very imperfect idea of Alfred's merit, by confining myself to his military and political talents. His judicial institutions, and his zeal for the encouragement of arts and sciences, demand your particular attention. We must now, therefore, consider him in a character altogether civil—as the father of English law and English literature.

Though Alfred in the early part of his reign had subdued, settled, or expelled the Danes, as a body, straggling bands of that people afterwards continued to infest the kingdom with their robberies; and even the native English, reduced to extreme indigence by these and former depredations, abandoned themselves to a like disorderly life. They joined the robbers in pillaging the more wealthy part of their fellow-citizens. Those evils required redress, and Alfred took means effectually to remove them. In order to render the execution of justice more strict and regular, he divided all England into counties; these counties he subdivided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings. Every householder was answerable for the be-

haviour of his family, of his slaves, and even of his guests, if they resided above three days in his house. Ten neighbouring householders, answerable for each other's conduct, were formed into one corporation, under the name of a tithing, decennary, or friburgh, over which a person called a tithing-man, head-borough, or bors-holder, presided. Every man who did not register himself in some tithing was punished as an outlaw; and no man could change his habitation without a certificate from the head of the tithing to which he previously belonged [9].

These regulations may seem rigorous, and are not perhaps necessary in times when men are habituated to obedience and justice. But they were well calculated to reduce a fierce and licentious people under the salutary restraints of law and government: and Alfred took care to temper their severity by other institutions favourable to the freedom and security of the subject. Nothing can be more liberal than his plan for the administration of justice. The bors-holder summoned his whole decennary to assist him in the decision of smaller differences among the members of the corporation: in controversies of greater moment, the dispute was brought before the hundred, which consisted of ten decennaries, or a hundred families of freemen, and regularly assembled once in four weeks, for the trying of causes [10]. Their mode of decision claims your attention: twelve freeholders were chosen, who, having sworn with the chief magistrate of the hundred to administer impartial justice, proceeded to the examination of the cause that was submitted to them. In this simple form of trial you will perceive the origin of juries, or judgement by equals, an institution almost peculiar to the English nation, admirable in itself, and the best calculated for the preservation of man's natural rights, and the administration of justice, that human wisdom ever devised [11].

9 *Fœdus Alfredi et Gothurn.* cap. iii. ap. Wilkins. 10 Id. ibid.

11 Trial by jury was known to the Saxons, at least in criminal cases, before their

Besides these monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting, appointed for the more general inspection of the police of the district, for inquiring into crimes, correcting the misconduct of magistrates, and obliging every person to show the decennary in which he was registered. In imitation of their ancestors, the ancient Germans, the people on those occasions assembled in arms; whence a hundred was sometimes called a wapentake, and its court served for the support of military discipline, as well as the administration of justice.

The next superior court to that of the hundred was the county-court, which met twice a-year, and consisted of all the freeholders of the county, who had an equal vote in the decision of causes; but of this court I have already spokon in treating of the laws and government of the Saxons. I shall therefore only add here, that to the alderman and bishop, Alfred added a third judge in each county, under the name of sheriff, who enjoyed equal authority with the two former [12]. His office also empowered him to guard the rights of the crown in the county, and levy the fines imposed; which, in an age when money atoned for almost every violation of the laws of society, formed no inconsiderable branch of the public revenue.

In default of justice from all these courts, an appeal lay to the king himself in council; and, as the wisdom and justice of Alfred were universally revered, he was soon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of his dominions. In order to remedy this inconvenience, he chose the earl and sheriffs from among the men most celebrated for probity and knowledge in the kingdom: he punished severely all malversation in office; he removed all whom he found

settlement in Britain. But, among the nations of the continent, it was not necessary that the members of a jury should be unanimous in their decision: a majority was sufficient to acquit or condemn the person accused. Stiernhook *de jure Sueon. et Gothor. Vetust.* lib. i.

12 Ingulph. Hist.

unequal to the trust [13]; and, the better to guide magistrates of all kinds in the administration of justice, he framed a code of law, which, though now lost, served long as the basis of English jurisprudence, and is generally esteemed the origin of our COMMON LAW.

A.D. 890.

Alfred appointed regular meetings of the states of England twice a-year in the city of London, which he had repaired and beautified, and which thenceforth became the capital of the kingdom. Every thing soon wore a new aspect under his wise and equitable government. Such success attended his legislation, and so exact was the general police, that he is said to have hung up, by way of trial, golden bracelets near the high roads, and no man dared to touch them [14]. But this great prince, though rigorous in the administration of justice, which he wisely considered as the best means of repressing crimes, preserved the most sacred regard to the liberty of his people. His concern on this subject extended even to future times, and ought to endear his memory to every Englishman. "It is just," says he in his will, "that the English should for ever remain FREE AS THEIR OWN THOUGHTS [15]."

After providing for the security of his kingdom, and taming his subjects to the restraints of law, Alfred extended his care to those things which aggrandise a nation, and make a people happy. Sensible that good morals and knowledge are almost inseparable in every age, though not in every individual, he gave great encouragement to the pursuit of learning. He invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe: he established schools for the instruction of the ignorant: he founded, or at least repaired, the university of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges and revenues: he enjoined by law all freeholders, possessed of two hides of land [16], to send their children to

13 *Le Miroir de Justice*, chap. ii. 14 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii. 15 Asser. p. 2

16 A hide contained land sufficient to employ one plough. Gervase of Tilbury says, it commonly consisted of a hundred acres.

school: and he gave preferment, either in church or state, to such only as had made some proficiency in knowledge. But the most effectual expedient employed by Alfred for the encouragement of learning was his own example. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of civil objects which engaged his attention, and although he is said to have fought in person fifty-six battles by sea and land, this illustrious hero and legislator was able to acquire by his unremitted industry, during a life of no extraordinary length, a greater portion of knowledge, and even to produce more books, than most speculative men, in more fortunate ages, who have devoted their whole time to study. He composed a variety of poems, fables, and apt stories, to lead the untutored mind to the love of letters, and bend the heart to the practice of virtue. For the same purpose he translated from the Greek the instructive fables of Æsop. He also gave Saxon translations of the histories of Orosius and Bede, and of the Consolation of Philosophy, by Boëtius.

Alfred was no less attentive to the propagation of those mechanical arts which have a more sensible though not a more intimate connexion with the welfare of a state. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds, and suffered no inventor or improver of any useful or ingenious art to go unrewarded. He prompted men of activity and industry to apply themselves to navigation, and to push commerce into the most distant countries; and he set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue for maintaining a number of workmen, whom he employed in rebuilding or repairing towns and castles. The elegancies of life are said to have been brought to him even from the Mediterranean and the Indies[17]; and his subjects, seeing these desirable productions, and the means of acquiring riches by trade, were taught to respect those peaceful virtues by which alone such blessings can be earned or ensured.

17 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

This extraordinary man, who is justly considered, both by natives and foreigners, as the greatest prince after Charle-magne that Europe saw for several ages, and as one of the wisest and best that ever adorned the annals of any nation,
Oct. 900. died in the vigour of his age and the full strength of his faculties, after a life of fifty-one years, and a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and a half. His merit both in public and private life, may be set in opposition to that of any sovereign or citizen in ancient or modern times. He seems indeed, as is observed by an elegant and profound historian[18], to be the complete model of that perfect character which under the denomination of a sage, or truly wise man, philosophers have been so fond of delineating without the hope of ever seeing it realised.

18 Hume, vol. i.

LETTER XIII.

Of the Empire of Charle-magne and the Church, from the Death of Charles the Bald to that of Louis IV., when the Imperial Dignity was transferred from the French to the Germans.

THE continent of Europe, my dear Philip, toward the close of the ninth century, offers nothing to our view but calamities, disorders, revolutions, and anarchy. Louis the Stammerer, son of Charles the Bald, may be said to have
A. D. 877. purchased the crown of France at the price, and on the conditions, which the bishops and nobles were pleased to impose on him. He was not acknowledged before he had heaped lands, honours, and offices, on the nobility, and had promised that the clergy should enjoy the

same emoluments and privileges which they had possessed under Louis the Debonnaire[1].

Pope John VIII. eagerly wished that Louis should be elected emperor, in the room of his father, by the Italian states; but, not being able to carry his point, he retired into France, and held a council at Troyes, where he excommunicated the duke of Spoleto, and the marquis of Tuscany, for opposing his measures, and attacking the ecclesiastical state. One of the canons of this council is very remarkable: it expressly asserts, that "the *powers of* "*the world* shall not dare to seat themselves in the pre- "sence of bishops, unless desired[2]."

Louis the Stammerer died after a reign of eighteen months, and left his queen Adelaide pregnant. He was succeeded by Louis III. and Carloman II., two sons by a wife whom he had divorced. Duke Boson, father-in-law to Carloman, promoted the accession of those princes, that he might afterwards share the monarchy. By his intrigues with the pope and the clergy, he procured from a council a declaration of the necessity of erecting a new kingdom; and the members bestowed, by the divine inspiration (to use their own language), the kingdom of Arles, or Provence, upon this ambitious duke. Italy was in possession of Carloman, king of Bavaria, who had also seised part of Lorrain; and the French nobility already enjoyed most of the lands; so that a king of France retained little more than the mere shadow of royalty. A. D. 879.

On the death of the joint kings of France, who lived in harmony notwithstanding their confined situation, their brother Charles, born after his father's death, and known by the name of the Simple, ought to have succeeded to the monarchy, by the right of birth; but as he was very young, the nobles elected Charles the Fat (son of Louis the German), already emperor, and succes- A. D. 884.

1 Aimon. de Rebus Gestis Francorum, lib. v.

2 Concil. Gall. vol. iii.

sor to his two brothers[3]. He re-united in his person all the French empire, except the kingdom of the usurper Boson; and proved, what those who elected him had not sufficiently attended to, that a prince may conduct his affairs with judgement, while confined within a moderate compass, and yet be very unfit for the government of a great empire.

The incapacity, and even the cowardice of Charles, soon became too obvious to be denied. Though he had governed his paternal dominions without any visible defect of judgement, and raised himself to the empire by his reputation and address, his mind, instead of expanding itself to its new object, even shrank from it, and contracted itself, till every mark of ability disappeared. After disgracing himself by ceding Friseland to the Normans, and promising them a tribute for forbearance, he roused them by his perfidy, while he encouraged them by his weakness. Enraged at the death of their king, who had been invited to a conference and murdered, they entered France, burned Pontoise, and besieged Paris[4].

This siege is much celebrated by the French historians: prodigies are related of both parties. Eudes, count of Paris, whom we shall soon see on the throne of France; his brother Robert; bishop Gosselin; and his nephew, abbot Eble; were particularly distinguished by their valour and patriotism. The besieged defended themselves for a whole year against an army of thirty thousand men, and the combined efforts of courage and stratagem, before the emperor came to their relief. At length Charles appeared with a
A. D. 887. great force, fully persuaded that the Normans would retire at the sight of his standards[5]. But he soon found his mistake; for they did not show the smallest alarm. Preferring a shameful negotiation to a doubtful victory, he engaged to pay them a large ransom for his capital and the safety of his kingdom; and (what

3 Aimon. lib. v. 4 *Chron. Gest. Norm.* 5 Paul. Æmil. *de Gest. Franc.*

was still more disgraceful) not being able to raise the money till the spring, he permitted the Normans to winter in Burgundy, which had not yet acknowledged his authority; or, in other words, to continue their ravages, which they did with the most insatiable fury[6].

This ignominious treaty, and its consequences, entirely ruined the emperor's reputation, which was already low. He had no minister in whom he could confide; for he was neither loved nor feared. The Germans first revolted. Charles had incurred the hatred of the nobility by attempting to limit the hereditary fiefs; and he made the clergy his enemies, while he exposed himself to universal contempt, by prosecuting Ludard, bishop of Verceil, his prime minister, and the only person of authority in his service, on a suspicion of a criminal correspondence with the empress Richilde, whom he imprisoned, and who completed his disgrace. She affirmed, that she was not only innocent of the crime laid to her charge, but a pure virgin, yet untouched by her husband or her accuser; in support of which asseveration she offered to undergo any trial that should be assigned to her, according to the superstitious custom of those times, when an appeal to Heaven supplied the place of a jury of matrons. Ludard fostered the general discontent; and Charles was deposed in a diet of the empire, and neglected to such a degree as to be obliged to subsist by the liberality of the archbishop of Mentz[7].

A. D. 888.

Arnold, the bastard son of Carloman the Bavarian king, and grandson of Louis the German, was now raised to the imperial dignity. Italy submitted alternately to Berengarius, duke of Friuli, and Guido, duke of Spoleto, both of the family of Charle-magne by the mother's side. Their competitions were long and bloody. Count Eudes, whose valour had saved Paris, and whose father, Robert the Strong,

6 *Gest. Norm.* 7 *Annal. Fuldens.*

had been no less brave than illustrious, was chosen king of France; a dignity which he agreed to hold in trust for Charles the Simple, yet a minor[8].

Notwithstanding the courage and talents of Eudes, France was still a scene of contention and disorder. A faction pretended to assert the right of the lawful heir, who was not really injured; and Eudes ceded to him the greater part of the kingdom. Count Rodolph established the kingdom of Transjurane Burgundy (so called from its situation beyond mount Jura), which comprehended nearly the present Switzerland and part of Savoy. A council confirmed to Louis, the son of Boson, the kingdom of Arles, as a council had given it to his father[9]. History would be a mere chaos were it to comprehend all the acts of violence, treachery, and outrage, that disgraced this period. I shall therefore only notice the leading circumstances, which alone deserve your attention.

A. D. 898. Eudes died before he was able to remedy the disorders of the state; and Charles the Simple (too justly so named), now acknowledged king of France in his own right, increased by his weakness the prevailing evils. The nobles openly aspired to independence. They usurped the governments with which they had been intrusted, and extorted confirmations of them from Charles for themselves and their heirs, on the easy condition of an empty homage[10]. A large and once well-regulated kingdom was divided into a multitude of separate principalities, altogether independent of the crown, or dependent only in name, whose possessors waged continual wars with each other, and exercised an insupportable tyranny over their vassals. By these means the people were either reduced to a state of absolute servitude, or to a condition so preca-

8 *Annal. Metens.* 9 Regin. *Chron.*
10 *Orig. des Dignitez. et des Magist. de France*, par Fauchet.

rious and wretched, that they were often happy to exchange it for protection and slavery[11].

The Normans took advantage of this state of weakness and anarchy to establish themselves in France. Rollo, one of their most illustrious leaders, and truly a great captain, after having spread terror over all the maritime provinces of Europe, sailed up the Seine, took Rouen, fortified it, and made it his head quarters. Now sure of a safe retreat, he set no bounds to his depredations; and soon became so formidable, that Charles offered him his daughter in marriage, with a part of the Neustrian realm as her dowry. Francon, archbishop of Rouen, was charged with the negotiation. He only demanded that Rollo should acknowledge Charles as his superior, and become a good Christian; and, in order to induce the Norman to embrace the faith, the prelate preached of a future state, of hell, and of heaven. Interest, not superstition, determined Rollo. After consulting his soldiers, who, like most gentlemen of the sword, were very easy on the article of religion, he agreed to the treaty; on condition that the province of Bretagne should also be ceded to him, till Neustria, then entirely laid waste by the ravages of his countrymen, could be cultivated. His request was granted; he was baptised, and did homage for his crown, less as a vassal than a conqueror[12].

A. D. 905.

A. D. 912.

Rollo was worthy of his good fortune: he sunk the soldier in the sovereign, and proved himself no less skilled in the arts of peace than in those of war. The country ceded

11 Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Loix*. liv. xxx.

12 When he came to the last part of the ceremony, which was that of kneeling and kissing the king's toe, he positively refused compliance: and it was with much difficulty that he could be persuaded to make that compliment, even by one of his officers. At length, however, he agreed to the alternative. But all the Normans, it seems, were bad courtiers: for the officer commissioned to represent Rollo, despising so unwarlike a prince as Charles, caught his majesty by the foot, and, pretending to carry it to his mouth that he might kiss it, overturned both him and his chair before all his nobility. This insult was passed over as an accident, because the French nation was in no condition to revenge it. Gul. Gemet. *Chron. Norm.*

to him (which thenceforth took the name of Normandy, in honour of its new inhabitants), soon became happy and flourishing under his laws. Sensible that the power of a prince is always proportioned to the number of his subjects, he invited a great number of Scandinavians to colonise his dominions. He encouraged agriculture and industry; was particularly severe in punishing theft, robbery, and every species of violence; and rigidly exact in the administration of justice, which he saw was the great basis of policy, and without which his people would naturally return to their former irregularities[13]. A taste for the sweets of society increased with the conveniences of life, and the love of justice with the benefits derived from it; and in a short time not only was the new duchy populous and well-cultivated, but the Normans were regular in their manners, and obedient to the laws. A band of pirates became good citizens, and their leader the ablest prince and the wisest legislator of the age in which he lived.

While these things passed in France, great alterations took place in the neighbouring states, and among the princes of the blood of Charle-magne: but only the most remarkable claim our attention. The emperor Arnold was succeeded by his son Louis IV., only seven years of age. Another Louis, king of Arles, crossed the Alps, and obliged the pope to crown him emperor. But he was soon after surprised at Verona by Berengarius, who put out his eyes, and ascended the throne of Italy, for which he had long contended[14]. On the decease of the son of Arnold, the empire departed from the French to the Germans; from the family of Charle-magne to those Saxons whom he had subdued and persecuted, who became in their turn the protectors of that religion for which they had suffered, and the persecutors of other pagans. But this revolution deserves a particular letter.

A.D. 912.

13 Gul. Gemet.—Dudon *de Morib. et Act. Duc. Norm.*
14 *Annal. Metens.*

LETTER XIV.

Of the German Empire, from the Election of Conrad I. to the Death of Henry the Fowler.

SOME historians are of opinion, that the German empire does not properly commence till the reign of Otho the Great, when Italy was re-united to the imperial dominions; but the extinction of the race of Charle-magne in Germany, when the empire was wholly detached from France, and the imperial dignity became elective, seems to me the most natural period to fix its origin, though the first two emperors never received the papal sanction. I shall therefore begin with Conrad, the first German who ruled the empire after it ceased to be considered as an appendage of France. A. D. 912.

Though the successors of Charle-magne possessed that empire which he had formed by virtue of hereditary descent, they had usually procured the consent of the nobles to their testamentary deeds, that no dispute might arise with regard to the succession. This precaution was highly necessary in those turbulent times, especially as the imperial dominions were generally divided among the children of the reigning family, who were thus put in a better condition to contest a doubtful title. What was at first no more than a politic condescension of the emperors, the public gradually interpreted into a privilege of the nobility; and hence originated the right of those electors, by whom the emperor is still invested with the imperial power and dignity. They had already deposed Charles the Fat, and raised Arnold to the empire.

Thus authorised by custom, the German nobles assembled at Worms, on the death of Louis IV., and, not

judging Charles the Simple worthy to govern them, they offered the imperial crown to Otho, duke of Saxony. But he declined it, on account of his age; and, with a generosity peculiar to himself, recommended to the electors Conrad, duke of Franconia, though his enemy. Conrad was accordingly chosen by the diet. The empire then comprehended not only the present German circles, but also Holland, Flanders, and Switzerland.

The reign of Conrad I. was one continual scene of troubles, though he took every necessary measure to support his authority, and preserve the tranquillity of the empire. He was no sooner elected than he had occasion to march into Lorrain, where the nobility, being attached to the family of Charle-magne, acknowledged Charles the Simple as their sovereign, and offered to put him in possession of that country. Before Conrad could settle the affairs of Lorrain, he was recalled by the revolt of several powerful dukes, who envied his promotion. One rebellion succeeded another; and, to complete his misfortunes, the Hungarians invaded the empire. They had for some time been accustomed to pass the entrenchments formed by Charle-magne along the Raab in order to restrain their incursions; and, no less fierce than the ancient Huns, they had widely diffused their devastations. They had several times pillaged Italy; and now in their way from that country, where they had humbled Berengarius (taking advantage of the troubles of the empire), they made interruptions into
A. D. 917. Saxony, Thuringia, Franconia, Lorrain, and Alsace, which they desolated with fire and sword, and obliged Conrad to purchase a peace on dishonourable terms[1]. This prince died without male heirs, after recommending to the Germanic body, as his successor, Henry duke of Saxony, son of that Otho to whom he owed his crown.

Henry I., surnamed the Fowler because he delighted in

[1] *Annal. German.* ap. Struv. *Corp. Hist.* vol. i.

the pursuit of birds, was elected with universal approbation by the assembled states, composed of the dignified clergy, the principal nobility, and the heads of the army. A. D. 919.

This right of choosing an emperor, originally common to all the members of the Germanic body, was afterwards confined, as we shall have occasion to see, to seven of the chief members of that body, considered as representatives of the whole, and of all its different orders; namely, the archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Treves, chancellors of the three great districts into which the German empire was anciently divided, the king of Bohemia, the duke of Saxony, the marquis of Brandenburg, and the count palatine of the Rhine[2].

It was still undecided whether Lorrain should belong to France or Germany. Henry, as soon as the situation of his affairs would permit, entered it with a powerful army, and subdued the whole country. His next objects were the internal peace and prosperity of the empire. He published a general amnesty in favour of all thieves and banditti, provided they would enlist in his armies, and actually formed them into a troop. He created marquises, in imitation of Charle-magne, to guard the frontiers of the empire against the Barbarians, and obliged all vassals and sub-vassals to furnish soldiers, and corn for their subsistence[3]. He likewise ordered the principal towns to be surrounded with walls, bastions, and ditches; and that the nobility might be habituated to the use of arms, even in time of peace, he instituted certain military games, or tournaments, in which they vied with each other in displaying their valour and address. A. D. 925.

After taking these wise measures for the welfare of the state, Henry began to prepare for war against the Hunga-

2 Goldast. *Politic. Imperial.* init. 3 *Ann. Sax.*

rians, whom he had exasperated by refusing to gratify them with an annual tribute (a disgrace to which Louis IV. had submitted), and by other marks of disdain and defiance. Enraged at his firmness, they entered Germany with a very numerous army, breathing vengeance. But Henry, being supported by the whole force of his dominions, defeated them with great slaughter at Mersburg, and rescued the empire from a barbarous enemy, and ignominious tribute[4].

A. D. 932.

Having thus subdued his enemies, and secured the tranquillity of his subjects, both at home and abroad, the emperor began to taste the fruits of his wisdom and valour, when the pope and the citizens of Rome invited him to the conquest of Italy, still distracted by civil wars; offering him the holy unction, and the title of Augustus. Henry, who wished to be master of Italy, and was also desirous of the papal sanction to the imperial crown, set out immediately for that country, at the head of his troops; but, being seised with an apoplexy on his march, he was obliged to return, and died at Mansleben in Thuringia. Before his death, he convoked the princes of the empire, who settled the succession on his son Otho.

A. D. 936.

Henry was universally allowed to be the ablest statesman and the greatest prince of Europe in his time: but his successor Otho, afterwards styled the Great, surpassed him both in power and renown, though not perhaps in valour or abilities. For, as Voltaire well observes, the acknowledged heir of an able prince, who has been the founder or restorer of a state, is always more powerful than his father, if not greatly inferior in courage and talents:— and the reason is obvious: he enters on a career already opened to him, and begins where his predecessor ended. Hence Alexander went further than Philip, Charle-magne than Pepin, and Otho the Great than Henry the Fowler.

4 Engelhus. p. 174.

But, before I proceed to the reign of Otho, we must take a view of the troubles of France under Charles the Simple, and his unhappy successors of the Carlovingian race.

LETTER XV.

Of the Affairs of France, from the Settlement of the Normans to the Extinction of the Carlovingian Race.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, seen the usurpations of the nobles, and the settlement of the Normans in France, under Charles the Simple. He gave continual proofs of his weakness, and became equally contemptible to the French and Normans. A violent attempt was made to dethrone him by Robert duke of France, brother to Eudes, the late king. This rebellion was defeated, in the first instance, by the unexpected answer of Rollo, duke of Normandy, who generously declared, when solicited to join in it, that he was equally incapable of abetting or suffering injustice[1].—Yet Rollo, as we have seen, was once a robber by profession. But then, as we ought to observe in his vindication, he was under engagements to no prince, and claimed the protection of no laws: he was then on a footing with the Cæsars and the Alexanders, and now only inferior in power to the Alfreds and Charle-magnes.

After the death of Rollo, duke Robert renewed his intrigues. He obliged the king to dismiss Haganon, his favourite counsellor; and then seised that minister's treasures with which he gratified his adherents. They declared Charles incapable of reigning, and pro A. D. 922.

1 Flodoardi *Chron.*

claimed Robert king of France. He was soon after killed in battle; yet his party triumphed; and his son Hugh the Great, or the Abbot, as he is styled by some writers, on account of the number of rich abbeys which he held) had the crown in his power. But he chose to place it

A. D. 923. on the head of Rodolph, duke of Burgundy, who assumed the title of king, and was almost universally acknowledged.

Charles was soon after decoyed into a fortress by the treacherous friendship of the powerful count of Vermandois, and detained prisoner. He now became the sport of the ambition of his own rebellious subjects. The count released him, and paid homage to him as his sovereign, when he wished to obtain a grant from Rodolph, and shut him up when he had succeeded in his object. The unfortunate prince died in confinement[2].

A. D. 929. After the death of Charles the Simple, Rodolph acted with much spirit and resolution. He repelled the incursions of some new tribes of Normans, restrained the licentiousness of the nobles, and restored both tranquillity and vigour to the kingdom. But, as

A. D. 936. this prince died without issue, France was again involved in troubles, and a kind of interregnum ensued. At length Hugh the Great, still disdaining the title of king, or afraid to usurp it, recalled Charles's son Louis (surnamed the Stranger) from England, whither he had been carried by his mother Edgiva, grand-daughter of the great Alfred[3].

The prince who was thus recalled was in a great measure unacquainted with the affairs of France; yet he conducted himself with a spirit becoming his rank, though not without some degree of that imprudence which was natural to his age. He attempted to rescue himself from the tyranny of duke Hugh, who allowed him little more

2 Glab. *Hist. sui Temp.*

3 Flodoardi *Chron.*

than the name of king. But, after a variety of struggles, he was obliged to make peace with his vassal, and cede to him the county of Laon.

Louis the Stranger died at the age of thirty-eight years, and left a shadow of royalty to his son Lothaire; or rather Hugh the Great was pleased to grant him the title of king, that he himself might enjoy the power. This ambitious nobleman, no less formidable than the ancient mayors, died in 956, and was succeeded in consequence and abilities by his son Hugh Capet. A.D. 954.

Lothaire wanted neither courage nor ambition. He attempted to recover Lorrain, which had been for some time in the possession of the emperors of Germany. But Otho II., by an artful stroke of policy, disconcerted his measures, and ruined his reputation. He ceded the disputed territory to the king's brother Charles, on condition that he should hold it as a fief of the empire. Lothaire, incensed at this donation, by which his brother was benefited at the expense of his character, his interest, and the honour of his crown, assembled a powerful army, and marched suddenly to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he surprised the emperor, and put him to flight. He himself was vanquished, in his turn, and was again victorious. But, at the end of the contest, he was obliged to resign Lorrain, which was divided between Charles and Otho[4]. A. D. 980.

He died in 986, and was quietly succeeded by his son Louis V., who governed under the direction of Hugh Capet, during a short and turbulent reign. With him ended the sway of the Carlovingians, or descendants of Charle-magne, the second race of French kings. The affairs of the empire now claim your attention. A. D. 987.

4 Aimon. lib. v.

LETTER XVI.

Of the German Empire and its Italian Dependencies, under Otho the Great, and his Successors of the House of Saxony.

OTHO I., the most powerful emperor since Charlemagne, and who had the honour of re-uniting Italy to the imperial dominions, was elected at Aix-la-Chapelle by the unanimous consent of the diet, according to the promise made to his father, Henry the Fowler[1]. A. D. 936. He began his reign with the most upright administration, and seemed desirous of living in peace and tranquillity. But his quiet was soon interrupted by wars both foreign and domestic, which he had sufficient abilities to manage, and which terminated in his aggrandisement.

The Hungarians, according to custom, invaded the empire, committing every species of barbarity. Otho, however, soon put a stop to their ravages. He came up with them on the plain of Dortmund, in Westphalia, and defeated them with great slaughter. But the Hungarians were not the only enemy Otho had to encounter. Immediately after his return from this victory, he was in-

1 The diets of the German empire were originally the same with the national assemblies convoked by the kings of France. They met at least once a year, and ever freeman had a right to be present. They were great councils, in which the sovereign deliberated with his subjects concerning their common interests. But when the nobles and dignified clergy acquired, with the rank of princes, territorial and independent jurisdiction, the diet became an assembly of the separate states that formed the confederacy, of which the emperor was the head; and, if any member possessed more than one of those states, he was allowed to have a proportional number of suffrages. On the same principle the imperial cities, as soon as they became free, and acquired supreme and independent jurisdiction within their own territories, were received as members of the diet. (Alrum. *de Comitiis Rom. German. Imperii.*) The powers of the diet extend to every thing relative to the common interests of the Germanic body, as a confederacy, but not to the interior government of the different states, unless when domestic disorders disturb or threaten the peace of the empire.

formed that the Bohemians had revolted. Bohemia was then entirely barbarous, and mostly pagan. A. D. 937. Otho, after a variety of struggles, rendered it tributary to Germany, and also obliged the inhabitants to embrace Christianity[2].

In the mean time the emperor was engaged in many disputes with his own rebellious subjects. On the death of Arnold, duke of Bavaria, his son Everard refused to do homage to Otho, on pretence that he was not his vassal, but his ally. This struggle between the crown and the great fiefs—between the power which always seeks increase, and liberty which aims at independence—for a long time agitated Europe. It subsisted in Spain, while the Christians had to contend with the votaries of Mohammed; but after the expulsion of the Moors, the sovereign authority gained the ascendant. It was this competition that involved France in troubles till the reign of Louis XI., when the feudal lordships were gradually circumscribed and weakened, and the nobles reduced to a dependence on the prince; that established in England the mixed government, to which we owe our present greatness, and cemented in Poland the liberty of the nobles with the slavery of the people. The same spirit hath, at different times, troubled Sweden and Denmark, and founded the republics of Holland and Switzerland: the same cause hath almost every-where produced different effects! The prerogatives of the prince have, in some instances, as in that of the German empire, been reduced to a mere title, and the national union itself preserved only in the observance of a few insignificant formalities. The duke of Bavaria was not willing to observe even these formalities: Otho therefore entered that country with an army, expelled Everard, and bestowed the duchy upon his uncle Bertolf, who willingly did homage for such a present[3].

2 Dubrav. *Hist. Bohem.*

3 Barre, *Hist. d'Allemagne*, tome iii.

The emperor at the same time created one of Everard's brothers count palatine of Bavaria, and the other count palatine of the Rhine.

This dignity of count palatine was revived from the counts of the palace of the Roman and French emperors. These palatines were at first supreme judges, and gave judgement in the last appeal, in the name of the emperor. They were also entrusted with the government of the imperial domains.

Otho having thus settled the internal tranquillity of the empire (which, however was soon disturbed by A.D. 940. the rebellion of his brother), assembled a diet at Arensberg, where among other things it was debated, whether inheritance should descend in a direct line; whether, for example, a grandson, heir to an eldest son, should succeed, on the death of his grand-father, in preference to his uncles. The diet not being able to come to any determination on this point, though so clear according to our present ideas of inheritance, it was agreed that the cause which had suggested the doubt should be decided by duel. An equal number of combatants were accordingly chosen on both sides; and the suit was determined in favour of the grandson, his champions being victorious[4]. The decision by arms was, for once, consistent with equity: the law is now universal. This mode of trial soon became general over Europe; and under the following reign a diet ordained, that doubtful cases should no longer be decided upon oath, but by the sword[5]. The base were thus deprived of the advantages which they might have reaped from perjury, whatever inconveniences might attend the ordinance[6]. And the regulation itself proves the baseness as well as the ignorance of the age.

4 Barre, *Hist. d'Allemagne*, tome iii. 5 *Leg. Longob.* lib. ii.

6 This reason is actually assigned, in a Barbarian code, in favour of the judicial combat, in cases where an oath might settle the dispute. *Leg. Burgund.* tit. xlv.

In order to counterbalance the power of the nobility, Otho augmented the privileges of the German clergy. He conferred on them duchies and counties, with all the rights of other princes and nobles: and, like Charle-magne, the founder of the empire whose lustre he restored, he propagated Christianity by force of arms. He obliged the Danes to pay him tribute, and receive baptism, as an earnest of their good behaviour[7]. A. D. 943. A. D. 948.

Pleased with his success in the North, Otho directed his attention to the South; and an opportunity of gratifying his ambition without injury to his humane feelings, now presented itself to his view. Italy was torn by factions, and ruled by tyrants. Rodolph II., king of the two Burgundies, had dethroned Berengarius, and was himself dethroned by Hugh, marquis of Provence, whose son Lothaire was also dethroned by Berengarius II. This Berengarius kept Adelaide, the widow of Lothaire, in confinement. She invited Otho to her relief. He entered Italy at the head of a powerful army, rescued Adelaide, married her, and obliged Berengarius to take an oath of fealty, generously leaving him in possession of his kingdom[8]. A. D. 952.

The pleasure which Otho must have received from the conquest of Italy was allayed by the revolt of his son Ludolph, who, though already declared successor to the empire, was so much chagrined at his father's second marriage, that he engaged in a rebellion against him with the duke of Franconia, and other German noblemen. Pursued by the vigilance of the emperor, Ludolph took refuge in Ratisbon, where he was soon reduced to extremity. At the intercession of his friends, however, he was permitted to retire with his followers. He again rebelled; but returning soon after to a sense of his duty, he took an opportunity, when Otho was hunting, to throw himself A. D. 955.

7 *Ann. Sax.* 8 Flodoard. lib. iv.

at his feet, and implored forgiveness in the most humiliating language. "Have pity," said he (after a pathetic pause), "on your child, who returns, like the prodigal "son, to his father. If you permit him to live, who has "so often deserved to die, he will be faithful and obedi-"ent for the future, and have time to repent of his folly "and ingratitude." The emperor, equally surprised and affected at this moving spectacle, raised his son from the ground, while the tears flowed from his eyes; received him into favour; and forgave all his followers[9].

The young prince afterwards died in Italy, whither he had been sent by his father, to humble the ungrateful Berengarius, who had broken his faith with the emperor, and tyrannised over his countrymen. The untimely A.D. 959. death of Ludolph, which greatly affected Otho, gave Berengarius time to breathe. He was soon absolute master of the ancient kingdom of Lombardy, but not of Rome, which was then governed by Octavian, grandson of the celebrated Marozia, concubine of Sergius III. By the great interest of his family, he had been elected pope at the age of eighteen, when he was not even in orders. He took the name of John XII. out of respect to the memory of his uncle, John XI., and was the first pope who changed his name on his accession to the pontificate[10].

This John XII. was a patrician, or nobleman of Rome, and consequently united in the papal chair the privileges of temporal and spiritual authority, by a right whose legality could not be disputed. But he was young, sunk in debauchery, and unable to oppose the tyranny of Berengarius and his son Adelbert: he therefore conjured Otho, "by the love of God and of the holy apostles, to A.D. 960. "come and deliver the Roman church from the "fangs of two monsters." This flattering invitation was accompanied with an offer of the papal sanction to the im-

9 *Annal. Germ.* 10 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.* lib. vi.

perial crown, and of the kingdom of Lombardy, from the Italian states.

In compliance with the request of the pope, or rather with the occasion it afforded of gratifying his own ambition, the emperor assembled a powerful army, and marched into Italy, after having convoked a diet at Worms, where Otho, his son by Adelaide, was elected his successor—a necessary precaution in those troublesome times for securing the crown in a family. Berengarius fled before him: he entered Pavia without opposition, and was crowned king of Lombardy at Milan, by the archbishop of that city, in presence of the nobility and clergy, who had formally deposed Berengarius. Rome also opened its gates to Otho: and the pope crowned him emperor of the Romans, dignified him with the title of Augustus, and swore allegiance to him on the tomb where the body of St. Peter is said to be deposited [11]. The emperor at the same time confirmed to the apostolic see the donations made by Pepin and Charle-magne, "saving in "all things," says he, "our authority, and that of our "son and descendants [12];" expressions by which it appears that, in this grant, Otho reserved to the empire the supreme jurisdiction over the papal territories.

A. D. 962.

Otho now marched in pursuit of Berengarius, whom he seised, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Meanwhile the pope, finding that he had given himself a master in a protector, repented of his conduct, violated his oath to the emperor, and entered into a league with Adelbert, the son of Berengarius. Otho suddenly returned to Rome; Adelbert fled; and a council deposed John XII. for his debaucheries, as was pretended, but in reality for revolting from the emperor, though his licentiousness was sufficiently enormous to render him unworthy of any civil or ecclesiastical dignity. Leo VIII., a layman, but

11 *Scriptor. Rerum Germanicarum, edit.* Meibom.

12 *Exemplar. Diplom. Othon.* ap. Baron.

A. D. 963. a man of virtue, was elected his successor; and the clergy and citizens of Rome took anew the oath of allegiance to Otho, and bound themselves neither to elect nor consecrate a pope without the consent of the emperor[13].

But Otho having occasion to quell some disturbances in Spoleto, a faction reinstated John XII., a new council deposed Leo; and a canon was enacted, declaring "that no inferior can degrade a superior[14];" the framers of which not only meant to intimate that the bishops and cardinals had no power to depose a pope, but that the emperor, as a layman, owed to the church that very allegiance which he exacted from her.

A. D. 964.

Soon after this revolution, pope John was assassinated in the arms of one of his mistresses. His party, however, still refused to acknowledge Leo, and proceeded to the election of Benedict V., who was accordingly promoted to the chair of St. Peter. Informed of these audacious and faithless proceedings, Otho marched back to Rome, which he reduced, and restored Leo VIII. to his dignity. Benedict appeared before a council; owned himself guilty of usurpation; stripped himself of the pontifical robes; implored compassion, and was banished to Hamburg. Leo VIII., with all the clergy and Roman people, enacted at the same time a celebrated decree, which was long considered as a fundamental law of the empire; "That "Otho, and his successors in the kingdom of Italy, "should always have the power of choosing a successor, "of naming the pope, and of giving investiture to bishops[15].

The affairs of Italy being thus settled, Otho returned to Germany; where he had scarcely arrived, when the Italians again revolted, and expelled John XIII., who had been elected in presence of the imperial commissioners, after the death of Leo VIII. Enraged at

A. D. 965.

13 Sigon. lib. vii.

14 Luitprand. lib. vi.

15 *Extract.* in Grat.

so many instances of perfidy, Otho once more entered Italy, and marched to Rome, which he treated with a severity somewhat bordering on revenge, but justly merited. He banished the consuls, hanged the tribunes, and caused the prefect of Rome, who aimed at the character of a second Brutus, to be whipped naked through the streets on an ass[16]. These ancient dignities subsisted only in name, and the people were destitute of every virtue. They had repeatedly broken their faith to the prince, whose protection they had craved, and to whom they had sworn allegiance: an attempt therefore to restore the republic, which had at one time been considered as the height of patriotism, was now deservedly punished as a seditious revolt—though a person of no less eminence than Voltaire seems to consider both in the same light.

A. D. 966.

After re-establishing the pope, and regulating the police of Rome, Otho retired to Capua, where he received ambassadors from Nicephorus, the Greek emperor, who wished to renew the old alliance between the eastern and western empires, and also proposed a marriage between the princess Theophania and Otho's son, lately associated with his father in the supreme power. In the course of this negotiation, however, the Greek grew jealous of the German, and ordered the nobles to be assassinated who came to receive the princess. Incensed at so enormous a perfidy, Otho directed his generals to enter Calabria, where they defeated the Greek army, cut off the noses of their prisoners, and sent them in that condition to Constantinople[17].

A. D. 967.

A. D. 968.

But peace was soon after established between the two empires. Nicephorus being put to death by his subjects, John Zimisces, his successor, sent Theophania into Italy; where her marriage with young Otho was consummated,

16 Sigon. lib. vii. 17 Id. Ibid.

and all differences were accommodated[18]. The emperor returned to Germany, covered with glory and success, and lived to enjoy the fruits of his victories two years in his native Saxony. He died after a reign of thirty-six years; during which he had justly acquired the appellation of the GREAT, the Conqueror of Italy, and the Restorer of the Empire of Charle-magne.

A. D. 970.

May 973.

Otho II., surnamed the Sanguinary, on account of the blood spilled under his reign, succeeded his father at the age of eighteen. His youth occasioned troubles, which his valour enabled him to dissipate. Henry, duke of Bavaria, and several other noblemen, rebelled, but were all reduced in a short time. Denmark and Bohemia felt his power, and Rome, by new crimes, offered a theatre for his justice. The consul Crescentius, son of the abandoned Theodora, who had been concubine to pope John X., revived the project of restoring the republic, and caused Benedict VI., who adhered to the emperor, to be murdered in prison. His faction elected Boniface VII., another faction elected Benedict VII., and a third John XIV., who was put to death by Boniface[19].

These horrors succeeded one another so rapidly that chronologists have not been able to ascertain the dates, nor historians accurately to settle the names of the pontiffs. The pope of one party was the anti-pope of another. But, Benedict VII. and the imperial party prevailing, Boniface went to Constantinople, and implored the Greek emperors, Basil and Constantine, to come and restore the throne of the Cæsars in Italy, and deliver the Romans from the German yoke.

This circumstance, my dear Philip, merits your attention. The popes, in order to increase their power, had formerly renounced their allegiance to the Greeks, and

18 *Annal. de l'Emp.* vol. i. 19 Sigon. lib. vii.

called in the Franks. They afterwards had recourse to the Germans, who confirmed the privileges granted to them by the French; and now they seemed ready to receive their ancient masters, or rather to acknowledge no master at all: and hence they have been accused of boundless ambition. But in these proceedings I can see no foundation for such a charge. It is natural for man to desire sway; and, when obtained, to seek to increase it. When the popes had become temporal princes, they would consequently seek to secure and extend their dominion. If they had acted otherwise, they would not have been men. I am much more offended at that dominion of blind belief, which they endeavoured to extend over the human mind. The one was a generous, the other an ignoble ambition; the first made only a few men change their sovereign, the latter subjected millions to a debasing superstition, and was necessarily accompanied with hypocrisy and fraud.

I have already mentioned, in the history of France, the dispute about Lorrain, which Otho II. politically shared with Lothaire's brother Charles, on condition that the French prince should do homage for it after the custom of those times, with bended knee, and closed hands. That war being finished, and the affairs of Germany settled, Otho marched into Italy, entered Rome without opposition, and severely chastised the rebels; but, in attempting to wrest Calabria from the Greeks, his troops were routed by the Saracens, whom the Greeks had called to their assistance[20]. He died at Rome, while he was preparing to take revenge on the enemy.

A. D. 981.

Otho III. succeeded his father at twelve years of age; and his uncle and his mother disputing the administration, Germany was disquieted by a turbulent regency, while Rome became a prey to new factions,

A. D. 983.

20 Leonis Ostiensis *Hist.* lib. ii.

and the scene of new crimes. Crescentius blew again the trumpet of liberty, and persuaded the Romans they were still free, that he might have it in his power to enslave them.

When the emperor began to act for himself, he displayed considerable abilities both in war and peace. He defeated the Danes, who had invaded the empire, and entered into a friendly alliance with Eric, king of Sweden, on condition that German missionaries should be allowed to preach the Gospel in his dominions[21]; a great concession in those times, and highly mortifying to the zealots of the religion of Odin.

A. D. 989.

He afterwards marched into Italy at the intercession of John XV. who was persecuted by Crescentius. Alarmed at the name of Otho, which had so often proved fatal to their confederates, the rebels returned to their duty, and Crescentius was pardoned. But as soon as the emperor had left Rome, that licentious spirit again revolted; expelled Gregory V., the successor of John XV., and elevated to the papal chair a creature of his own, under the name of John XVI. Enraged at this fresh insult, Otho returned with a powerful army to Rome, which he took by assault; ordered Crescentius to be beheaded, and the anti-pope to be thrown from the top of the castle of St. Angelo, after his eyes had been put out, and his nose cut off[22]. Having restored Gregory, and again received the allegiance of the citizens of Rome, Otho returned to Germany.

A. D. 996.

A. D. 998.

The Saracens afterwards making an irruption into the Campania of Rome, the emperor was again obliged to march into Italy. He expelled the ravagers, and repaired with a small body of troops to Rome, where his life was endangered by a conspiracy; and, while he was assembling forces to punish the rebels, he is

A. D. 1001.

21 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i. 22 Ibid.—Heiss, *Hist. de l'Emp.* tome i.

said to have been poisoned by a pair of gloves sent him by the widow of Crescentius, whom he had debauched under a promise of marriage[23].

The empire sustained a great loss in the death of this prince, who was equally brave, resolute, and just, and by a glorious reign of eighteen years, changed the surname of Infant, which had been given him at his accession, into that of the Wonder of the World. Jan. 1002.

As Otho died without children, many candidates for the imperial dignity arose. The prince who obtained it was Henry duke of Bavaria, who, after he had passed some years in adjusting the disordered affairs of Germany, found it necessary to march into Italy, where Ardouin, marquis of Ivrea, had assumed the sovereignty. The usurper retired at the approach of Henry, who was crowned king of Lombardy, at Pavia, by the archbishop of Milan; but the marquis having some partisans in that city, they inflamed the populace to such a degree, that the emperor was in danger of being sacrificed to their fury. The tumult was at last quelled by the imperial troops. Those within the city defended the palace, while detachments from the camp scaled the walls, and committed terrible slaughter in the streets, till Henry ordered them to desist, and retired to the fortress of St. Peter. Thither the principal citizens repaired in a body; implored the emperor's clemency; protested their loyalty, and laid the blame of the sedition on the partisans of Ardouin, who had practised on the ignorance of the vulgar. Henry generously admitted their apology: "Mercy," said he, "is my favourite virtue; and I "would much rather find your obedience the result of "affection than the consequence of fear[24]." A.D. 1005.

The troubles of Germany obliged the emperor to leave Italy without visiting Rome. But, when he had quelled

23 Auct. supra citat. 24 Heiss, lib. ii.—Barre, tome iii.

those disturbances, he returned to Italy with his wife Cunegunda, and was crowned by Benedict VIII. He at the same time again defeated Ardouin, and quieted the disorders of Lombardy. A.D. 1014.

Weary of human greatness or of the toils of empire, and charmed with the tranquillity of a monastic life, Henry had for some time expressed a desire of retiring from the world, and now actually assumed the religious habit. But the abbot of St. Val, when he received the emperor as a brother, wisely imposed the following command on him: "Monks owe obedience to their superior," said he: "I order you to continue at the helm of government[25]."

In consequence of this injunction, Henry consented to wear the crown, and increased in prosperity to the hour of his death. Yet he seems to have been a prince of a weak mind; for, besides his monastic whim, it appears that he had made a vow of chastity. And, when he felt his end approaching, he sent for the parents of his wife Cunegunda, and said, "You gave her to me a virgin, and I restore her a virgin!"—Can a restraint on the natural inclinations be a virtue, where their indulgence does not interfere with the welfare of society? Do not think so. Such a declaration from a husband is almost sufficient to make us credit the charge of adultery adduced against Cunegunda, though she is said to have proved her innocence by handling red-hot iron. A.D. 1024.

25 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.

LETTER XVII.

Sketch of the History of Poland and Russia, and also of the Scandinavian States, to the Death of Magnus the Good, King of Denmark and Norway.

IN a survey of European occurrences and transactions, my dear son, the northern states are far from being unworthy of notice, though their history may be thought less interesting than that of the southern realms and nations.

Before I treat of Russia and the Scandinavian states, I will give you a short view of the history of Poland, which, though not strictly in the north of Europe, was formerly so connected or involved with Russia in politics and war, besides the community of origin, that I may without impropriety treat of it on this occasion.

The people were of Sarmatian origin; and the first rulers of the country, after the formation of several petty states into one, bore the title of duke. Lech was long considered by historians as the founder of the state: but we have so little authority for the accounts given of this prince and some of his reputed successors, that, in pretending to inform you of the acts of their government, I should rather seem to bewilder you in the darkness of fable and of error, than open to your view the light of genuine history.

Several centuries after the time assigned for the death of Lech, Piast, said to have been a wheelwright, was elevated to the dignity of duke of Poland, on the extinction A.D. 830. of the former line of princes. He governed with mildness, yet not without spirit, and left his dominions in peace to his son, by whose active valour they were considerably extended. The two succeeding dukes were not destitute of political ability; but Mieczslaus, the first Christian sovereign of Poland, was more fit to slumber in

a monastery than to govern a state, though he deserves our praise for his zeal in promoting the conversion of his subjects. His son Boleslaus possessed greater ability, but was inclined to deviate into an opposite extreme, being too fond of war and bloodshed. Soon after his accession, he was honoured by the emperor Otho III. with the title of king[1].

A. D. 999.

Boleslaus diffused the terror of his arms through Russia, Bohemia, Moravia, Saxony, and Prussia; and obtained the epithet of Great by his talents, his exploits, and his power. He was succeeded by his son Mieczslaus II., who was immediately engaged in a war with the Russians, which he closed with honour; but he was less successful against the Bohemians and other nations who attempted to shake off the tributary yoke imposed by his warlike predecessor.

A. D. 1025.

The tyranny and rapacity of Rixa, who acted as regent for Casimir, filled the country with confusion; and the fierce hostilities of the Bohemians and the Russians completed the misery of the nation. Casimir, who had been driven out of the realm during these commotions, was at length recalled. He conciliated the Russians by marrying a princess of their nation; and by his indefatigable exertion he restored peace and order to the state.

A. D. 1040.

Boleslaus II. was a brave but cruel and profligate prince. While he was carrying on a war against the Russians, a rebellion arose in his kingdom. He quelled it by the vigour of his arms, and punished it with inordinate severity. Having embroiled himself with the clergy by the murder of the bishop of Cracow, he was excommunicated by pope Gregory VII., and forced by the public hatred to quit his throne and country. Ladislaus, brother of the exiled prince, was for some time excluded from all power by the incensed pontiff; but his patient submission ulti-

1 Matth. Michov. *Chron.* lib. ii.—Mart. Cromeri *Hist.*

mately procured his elevation to the sovereignty, though he was not suffered to enjoy the royal title [2].

Proceeding to a review of the Russian history, I find myself authorised to inform you, that, about the year 862, Ruric, the enterprising leader of a body of Scandinavians, who were more fierce and warlike than the Sarmatians, changed into a principality the republican government which the latter had long maintained in the territory of Novogorod [3]. He preserved till his death the power which he thus acquired; and Oleg, one of his relatives, added the town and district of Kiow to the Russian possessions. Encouraged by this success, he invaded the dominions of the Greek emperor, Leo the Philosopher, whom he compelled to submit to dishonourable terms of peace; for philosophers in general, my dear Philip, are unable to withstand the energy of barbarian warriors.

Igor, the son of Ruric, ravaged in the year 941 some of the Asiatic provinces of the Greeks; but the invaders were so severely chastised by the troops of Constantine Porphyrogeneta, that scarcely a third part of their number returned to Russia. After Igor had fallen a victim to the resentment of the Drevlians, whom he had treated with insult and outrage, his widow Olga, who acted as regent for his son, subdued and cruelly punished the offending tribe. She more honourably distinguished herself in the sequel, by building towns and promoting commerce, as well as by introducing the Christian faith among the Russians, though they did not generally embrace it in her time. Svetoslaus, or Sviatoslaf, signalised his courage against the Bulgarians, but was unfortunate in a war with the Greeks, and was killed in 973 by the Petchenegans, whom he had endeavoured to bring under his yoke. He was so imprudent as to divide his territories among his three sons; but, after bloody dissensions, they were re-

2 Michov. *Chron.*—Guaguin. *Sarmat. Europ. Descript.*

3 Muller, *Sammlung Russischer Geschichte*, vol. i.

united by Wolodimir or Vladimir, who became a great and successful prince, recovering the obedience of revolted tribes, and extending his frontiers at the expense of his neighbours. He endeavoured to civilise and polish his subjects; but their minds were not then ripe for general improvement, though they consented to become Christians in imitation of his example. His latter days were embittered by the contumacy of his son Jaroslaus or Yaroslaf; and he is said to have died of grief, in 1015, while he was marching against the rebellious prince. Sviatopolk now endeavoured to deprive his brother Jaroslaus of his share of the succession; but he was baffled in his schemes, and obliged to quit the country. He was re-instated by Boleslaus I., king of Poland, whose daughter he had espoused; but, being defeated by his brother, he died in his retreat from the field of battle[4].

The reign of Jaroslaus was honourable to himself, and beneficial to his subjects. He framed a code of laws, encouraged arts and manufactures, and provided for the diffusion of religious and moral principles. He died at the age of seventy-six years, distributing his dominions among four of his sons, whom he had by a Swedish princess.

A.D. 1054.

Sweden now claims some degree of attention; but it is not necessary that I should dwell long upon the subject. The early history of that kingdom is doubtful and obscure. After a series of Gothic rulers of the state, we hear of its being subdued, about the year 760, by Ivar king of Denmark[5]. Another cloud hangs over the realm till the appearance of Biorn, who appears to have reigned before the middle of the ninth century. Under his government, the Swedes were enlightened with Christian knowledge. Near the close of that century, their king Olaus or Olaf II. conquered Denmark; but how long he or his posterity re-

4 Nest. *Chron.*—Muller, *Sammlung Russ. Gesch.* vol. i.
5 Snorronis Sturlonidis *Hist. Regum Septentrion.*

tained it, we cannot clearly discover. From that time to the reign of Ingo the Pious, we meet with no certain accounts or memorable incidents. This prince was murdered by some pagan mal-contents for his Christian zeal; but his brother Alstan, being more popular, died in peace [6].

With regard to Denmark, we hear of the reign of Skiold in that conntry about the beginning of the sixth century; but we cannot depend on the information. After a long list of supposed princes, we observe the name of Godfrey, who is styled king of Denmark by the historian of Charlemagne. Heming succeeded him in 810; and on the death of this prince, a bloody conflict ensued, by which Harold and Regenfroy obtained possession of the throne. These associated kings invaded Norway with success in 813, but were soon after deprived even of their former kingdom by the sons of Godfrey [7]. Harold, however, recovered a part of his realm, and enjoyed the favour and friendship of Louis the Debonnaire, at whose court he was baptised in the Christian faith. Other princes followed, whose subjects, like the Swedes and Norwegians, were more addicted to piracy than attached to the peaceful arts of civilised society.

Early in the tenth century, another prince of the name of Harold, one of the descendants of a Gothic chieftain who had emigrated from Sweden when it was over-run by the victorius Ivar, reduced some principalities, and became king of all Norway. On the death of his grandson in 977, the kingdom was degraded into an earldom under the Danish sovereign: but its dignity was soon restored, and the people were converted from the absurdities of paganism [8].

Sweyn king of Denmark, of whose success in England you will soon be informed, appears to have exercised some

6 Adami Bremensis *Hist.*—Pufendorff. 7 Eginhardi *Annal.*
8 Snorronis *Hist. Regum Septent.*

authority in Norway; and his successor, Canute the Great, obtained possession of that kingdom. Olaus, in attempting to recover the crown, lost his life in 1030. Canute's son Sweyn governed for some years the Norwegian territories; but, on his father's death, he was removed from his high station by the efforts of the people, who placed on their throne Magnus, the son of Olaus. The new king concluded an agreement with Hardi-canute, the Danish monarch, importing that the survivor should be sovereign of both realms. The death of the Dane, in 1042, gratified the Norwegian prince with that honour and benefit; and he reigned with reputation till the year 1047, when the kingdoms were again divided.

From this necessary survey of the Sarmatian and Gothic states, I now lead you to a renewed consideration of the affairs of your own country.

LETTER XVIII.

Of the chief Occurrences and Transactions in England from the Death of Alfred to the Reign of Canute the Great.

ENGLAND, my dear Philip, from the reign of Alfred to the Danish conquest, affords few objects to arrest the attention of the scholar, the gentleman, or the politician. Little attention was paid to arts or letters; which, with manners, suffered a decline. The constitution remained nearly the same. A concise account of the principal reigns will therefore be sufficient for your purpose; more especially as England, during this period, had no connexion with the affairs of the continent.

Alfred was succeeded by his son Edward the Elder, being the first of that name who sat on the English throne.

Though inferior to his father in genius and erudition, he equaled him in military talents: and he had occasion for them. Ethelwald, his cousin, disputed the crown, and called in the Danes to support his claim. The death of this claimant, who fell in a battle with the Kentish men [1], decided the quarrel; but Edward's wars with the Danes continued during the greater part of his reign, though he was successful in almost every engagement. A.D. 905.

Athelstan, Edward's natural son, obtained the kingdom, in preference to his legitimate children. As he had arrived at an age more suited to the cares of government, and the nation, exposed to foreign and domestic wars, required a prince of vigour and abilities, the stain in his birth was overlooked. A.D. 925.

No sooner was he securely seated on the throne, than he endeavoured to give it stability by providing against the insurrections of the domestic Danes. With this view he marched into Northumberland, their most considerable settlement; and finding that they bore with impatience the English yoke, he judged it prudent to confer on Sithric, a Danish nobleman, the title of king, and to give him his sister Editha in marriage, as a farther motive of attachment. But this policy, though apparently wise, proved the source of many troubles.

Sithric died within a twelvemonth after his elevation; and his two sons by a former marriage, Anlaf and Guthfred, founding pretensions on their father's rank, assumed the sovereignty, without waiting for the approbation of Athelstan. But they were soon expelled by that powerful monarch, who was no less brave than politic. The former took shelter in Ireland, the latter in Scotland; where he was protected for some time by the clemency of Constantine, who then swayed the Scottish sceptre. Continually solicited, however, and even menaced, by the English mo-

1 *Chron. Sax.*

narch, Constantine at last promised to deliver up his guest; but secretly detesting such treachery, he gave him a hint to make his escape. Incensed at Constantine's behaviour, though the death of the fugitive had freed him from all apprehensions, Athelstan entered Scotland with a numerous army, and reduced the Scots to such distress, that their king was happy to preserve his crown by the most humble submission [2].

A.D. 934.

Athelstan afterwards defeated the Scots, Welsh, and Danes, in a general engagement at Brunsbury, in Northumberland. In consequence of this victory he enjoyed tranquillity during the rest of his reign. He appears to have been one of the most able and active of our ancient princes; and his memorable law for the encouragement of commerce discovers a liberality of mind worthy of the most enlightened ages; That a merchant, who had made two voyages on his own account, to distant lands, should be admitted to the rank of a gentleman [3].

A.D. 938.

Athelstan was succeeded by his brother Edmund; who, on his accession, met with some disturbance from the Northumbrian Danes, whom he reduced to obedience. He also conquered Cumberland from the Britons, and conferred that principality on Malcolm, king of Scotland, on condition that he should do homage to England for it, and protect the northern counties from all future incursions of the Danes [4].

A.D. 941.

A.D. 945.

Edmund's reign was short, and his death violent. As he was solemnising a feast in Glocestershire, a notorious robber, named Leolf, whom he had sentenced to banishment, audaciously entered the hall where his sovereign dined, and seated himself at one of the tables. Enraged at such insolence, Edmund ordered him to be seised; but, observing that the ruffian was preparing to resist, the indignant monarch sprang up, and catching him

A.D. 947.

2 Hoved. *Annal.*—Gul. Malmesb. 3 Brompt. *Chron.*
4 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

by the hair, dragged him out of the hall. Meanwhile Leolf, having drawn his dagger, lifted his arm with a furious blow, and stabbed the king, who immediately expired on the bosom of his murderer[5].

Edmund left male issue; but, as his eldest son was too young to govern the kingdom, his brother Edred was raised to the throne. The beginning of Edred's reign was disturbed by a revolt of the Northumbrian Danes. Though frequently humbled, they were never entirely subdued, nor had they ever paid a sincere allegiance to the English crown. Their obedience lasted no longer than the present terror. Edred, instructed by experience, took every precaution to prevent their future insurrections. He settled English garrisons in their most considerable towns, and placed over them an English governor, to watch their motions, and check the first appearance of revolt. A. D. 952.

Edred, though a brave and active prince, lay under the influence of the lowest superstition, and had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of St. Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, whom he advanced to the highest offices of state, and who concealed beneath an appearance of sanctity the most insatiable and insolent ambition. In order to impose on the credulity of mankind, this designing monk had long secluded himself from the world in a miserable cell, where he is said to have had frequent conflicts with the devil; but at length, when the infernal spirit attempted to seduce him in the shape of a woman, Dunstan seised him by the nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, and held him till the whole neighbourhood resounded with his bellowings[6]. Satan, thus vanquished, never more dared to show his face. This story and others of the like nature, then seriously believed, procured the abbot a reputation, both with prince and people, which no

5 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.—H. Huntingd. lib. v.

6 Osberne, in *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii.

real piety or virtue could possibly have obtained for him. Soon after his return from solitude, he was placed by Edred at the head of the treasury; and sensible that he owed his advancement solely to the opinion of his austerity, he professed himself a friend to the rigid monastic rules, which about this time began to prevail, and by which monks were excluded from all commerce with the world and with women. He introduced them into the convents of Glastonbury and Abingdon, and endeavoured to render them universal in the kingdom [7].

There had been monasteries in England from the first introduction of Christianity among the Saxons, and those establishments had been greatly multiplied by the mistaken piety of the English princes and nobles, who sought to bribe Heaven by donations to the church. But the monks had hitherto been a species of secular priests, who were at liberty either to marry or continue single, and who lived after the manner of our present canons or prebendaries. They both intermingled with the world, in some degree, and endeavoured to render themselves useful to it. A superstitious devotion, however, had produced in Italy a new species of monks, who secluded themselves entirely from the world, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the most inviolable chastity. The popes had favoured the doctrine from motives of general policy, as detaching the ecclesiastical from the civil power: Dunstan, equally artful, embraced it for his own aggrandisement. Celibacy was therefore extolled as the universal duty of priests; and, in England, the minds of men were already prepared for such an innovation, though it militates against the strongest propensities in human nature.

The first preachers of Christianity among the Saxons had carried to the most extravagant height the praises of

7 Osberne, in *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii.

inviolable chastity; the pleasures of love had been represented as incompatible with Christian perfection; and an abstinence from all commerce with the softer sex was deemed a sufficient atonement for the greatest enormities. It was a natural consequence of this doctrine, that those who officiated at the altar should at least be free from such pollution. And Dunstan and his reformed monks knew well how to avail themselves of these popular topics, and set off their own character to the best advantage. On the other hand, their rivals the secular clergy, who were numerous and rich, and had possession of the ecclesiastical dignities, defended themselves with vigour, and boldly maintained the sanctity of the institution of marriage[8]. The whole nation was thrown into a ferment.

In the mean time, the power of the monks received a check by the death of Edred, the dupe of their ambition. He left children, but in an infant state; the crown was therefore conferred on Edwy, one of the sons of Edmund. A. D. 955.

This prince, who was only seventeen years of age at his accession, possessed an elegant person, and the most amiable and promising virtues. But neither the graces of his figure nor the accomplishments of his mind could screen him from the fury of the monks, whom he unhappily offended in the beginning of his reign. The beautiful Elgiva, his second or third cousin, had made an impression on the susceptible heart of Edwy; and, as he was at an age when the tender passions are most keenly felt, he ventured to marry her, though within the degrees of consanguinity prohibited by the church. The austerity of the monks made them particularly violent on this occasion: the king therefore entertained a strong aversion against them, and resolved to oppose their project of expelling the seculars from the convents. But he soon had reason to repent his rashness in provoking such dangerous

8 Spelm. *Concil.* vol. i.

enemies. On the day of his coronation, while the nobility, assembled in the great hall, were indulging themselves in riot and disorder, after the example of their German ancestors, Edwy, attracted by the gentler pleasures of love, retired to the queen's apartment, and gave loose to his fondness, which was but feebly checked by the presence of her mother. Dunstan conjectured the reason of the king's absence; and, accompanied by Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an absolute ascendant, he burst into the royal privacy; drew Edwy from the arms of his consort, and pushed him back ignominiously into the company of the nobles, abusing the queen with the most opprobrious epithets[9].

Though Edwy was young, and had the prejudices of the age to encounter, he found means to revenge this public insult. He accused Dunstan of malversation in office, while at the head of the treasury; and as that minister did not clear himself of the charge, the king banished him. But Dunstan's partisans were not idle during his absence. They poisoned the minds of the people to such a degree by declamations against the king, and panegyrics on the abbot's sanctity, that the royal authority was despised, and even outrageously insulted. Archbishop Odo ordered the queen to be seised; and after her face had been seared with a red-hot iron, in order to destroy that fatal beauty which had ensnared the king, she was carried into Ireland, there to remain in perpetual exile[10].

Edwy, finding resistance ineffectual, was obliged to consent to a divorce, which was pronounced by the imperious Gdo. But these were not the only evils which attended this unfortunate prince and his consort. The amiable Elgiva was made prisoner by her persecutors, and cruelly murdered in returning to the embraces of the king, whom she still considered as her husband. Nothing less than her

9 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

10 Osberne, ubi. sup.

death could satisfy the archbishop and the monks. Edwy, by the same influence, was deposed from the sovereignty of all England to the northward of the Thames, in order to make room for his brother Edgar, a boy of thirteen years of age. Dunstan returned to England; took upon him the government of the young king and his party; was soon installed in the see of Worcester, and afterwards in that of Canterbury. In the mean time the unhappy Edwy was excommunicated, and pursued by his enemies with unrelenting vengeance[11]. But his early death freed them from all inquietude, and left Edgar in peaceable possession of the monarchy. A. D. 959.

The reign of Edgar is one of the most fortunate in the English annals. Though he was very young when he ascended the throne, he soon discovered an excellent capacity for government. He manifested no dread of war; he took the wisest precautions for public safety; and, by his vigilance and foresight, he was enabled to indulge his natural inclination for peace. He maintained a body of troops in the north, to keep the mutinous Northumbrians in awe, and to repel the inroads of the Scots. He also built and supported a powerful navy; and, in order to habituate the seamen to the practice of their profession, as well as to intimidate his enemies, he stationed three squadrons off the coasts of his kingdom, and commanded them to make by turns the circuit of his dominions. The foreign Danes durst not approach a country which was so strongly defended: the domestic Danes foresaw that destruction would be the inevitable consequence of insurrection; and the princes of Wales, of Scotland, and even of Ireland, were happy to appease so potent a monarch by submission[12].

But the politic Edgar more especially maintained his authority at home, and preserved public tranquillity, by paying court to Dunstan and the monks, who had vio-

11 Brompt. *Chron.*

12 Spelm. *Conc.* vol. i.

lently placed him on the throne, and whose claim to superior sanctity gave them an ascendant over the people. He favoured their scheme of pretended reformation: he consulted them in the administration of all ecclesiastical and even of many civil affairs; and, although the vigour of his genius prevented him from being entirely guided by them, he took care never to disoblige them. Hence he is represented by the monkish writers not only as an able politician, a character which he seems to have merited, but also as a saint and a man of virtue, though he was licentious in the highest degree, and violated every law human and divine. His very amours are a compound of barbarity and brutality. He broke into a convent, carried off a nun, and even committed violence on her person. Struck also with the charms of a nobleman's daughter, in whose house he was entertained, he demanded that she should pass that very night with him, without once consulting the young lady's inclinations[13]. But his most remarkable amour was with the beautiful Elfrida; and, as it is connected with the history of the following reign, I shall relate it circumstantially. It will give you at once an idea of the manners of the age and of the character of Edgar.

Elfrida, the only daughter and sole heiress of Ordgar earl of Devon, though educated in the country, and a stranger at court, had filled all England with the fame of her beauty. The amorous king sent Athelwold, his favourite, to ascertain, by a personal view, the truth or the falsehood of the rumour. The courtier no sooner saw Elfrida than he was inflamed with love, and determined to sacrifice to it his fidelity to his master: he therefore told Edgar, on his return, that the fortune and quality of Elfrida had alone been the cause of the adulation paid to her; and that her

13 This demand was made to the mother, who, being a woman of virtue, sent secretly to the king's bed, instead of her daughter, her maid Elfleda. Edgar, not displeased, forgave the old lady for her pious deceit, and transferred his love to Elfleda, who became his favourite mistress. *Gul. Malmesb.* lib. ii.

charms, far from being extraordinary, would have been entirely overlooked in a woman of inferior condition. "But," added he, when he found that he had blunted the keen edge of the king's curiosity, "though she has nothing to claim the attention of a sovereign, her immense "wealth would, to a subject, be a sufficient compensation "for the homeliness of her person; and, although it could "never produce on me the illusion of beauty, it might "make her a convenient wife!" Edgar, willing to establish his favourite's fortune, not only gave his approbation to the projected match, but forwarded its success by recommending him so strongly to the earl of Devon, that he was soon made happy in the possession of his beloved Elfrida. Dreading, however, the eyes of the king, he still found some pretence for detaining his wife in the country. But all his cautions were insufficient to conceal his treachery. Royal favourites are never without enemies: Edgar was soon informed of the truth; but, before he would punish Athelwold, he resolved to satisfy himself fully in regard to Elfrida's beauty. He therefore told his deceiver that he intended to pay him a visit at his castle, and be introduced to his wife. Athelwold was thunderstruck at the proposal; but, as he could not refuse such an honour, he only begged leave to go a few hours before his royal guest, that he might make due preparations for his reception. On his arrival, he fell at his wife's feet, discovered the whole secret, and conjured her, if she valued either her own honour or his life, to disguise as much as possible that fatal beauty which had tempted him to deceive his prince and friend. Elfrida promised compliance, though nothing appears to have been farther from her thoughts. She adorned her person with the most exquisite art, and called forth all her charms; not despairing, it should seem, yet to reach that exalted station of which Athelwold's fondness had deprived her. The event was answerable to her wishes: she excited at once in Edgar's bosom the warmest love, and

the keenest desire of revenge. The king, however, who could dissemble those passions, as well as feel them, beheld her with seeming indifference; and having seduced Athelwold into a wood, under pretence of hunting, he stabbed him with his own hand, took Elfrida to court, and soon after publicly married her[14].

This reign is remarkable for the extirpation of wolves from England. Edgar took great pleasure in pursuing those ravenous animals; and when he found they had all taken shelter in the mountains and forests of Wales, he changed the tribute of money imposed on the Welsh princes by Athelstan into an annual tribute of three hundred wolves' heads—a policy which occasioned so much diligence in hunting them, that the breed soon became extinct in the island.

Edgar was followed on the throne by his son Edward,
A. D. 975. commonly called the Martyr, whose succession, however, did not take place without much opposition. Elfrida, his step-mother, had a son named Ethelred, only eight years old, for whom she endeavoured to procure the crown. But the principal nobility, dreading her imperious temper, opposed a measure which must increase her authority, if not put her in possession of the regency; and Dunstan, to whom it was of great importance to have a king favourable to his cause, resolutely crowned and anointed Edward, over whom he had already gained an absolute ascendant. His short reign was remarkable for nothing but a continual struggle between the monks and the
A. D. 979. secular clergy. He was treacherously murdered at the instigation of Elfrida, whose son was then placed on the throne.

Soon after the accession of Ethelred, a prince without courage or capacity, England was again visited by the Danes. The wise regulations of Alfred, and the valour of his immediate successors, had long deterred those ravagers

14 Gul. Malmesb.—Brompt.

from approaching the British shores; and their settlement in France had required, for a time, most of their superfluous hands. But a new race of men having now sprung up in the northern regions, who could no longer disburthen themselves on Normandy, and England not being at this time governed by an Alfred or an Edgar, they ventured to renew their depredations. Ethelred, instead of rousing his people to defend with courage their prince and their property, meanly compounded with the enemy for his safety, by bribing them to retire from the kingdom[15]. A.D. 991.

This shameful expedient, which invited assailants, instead of repelling them, was attended with the success that might have been expected: the Danes returned, and were again bribed to depart. In the mean time Ethelred, from a policy incident to weak princes, embraced the cruel resolution of massacring the Danes who had settled in his dominions. Secret orders were given for this inhuman purpose, and the obnoxious colonists were destroyed without mercy. Even Gunilda, sister to Sweyn king of Denmark, who had married earl Paling, and embraced Christianity, was seised and put to death, after having seen her husband and son brutally murdered[16]. A.D. 1002.

This unhappy princess foretold, in the agonies of despair, that her murder would soon be revenged by the ruin of the English nation. Never was prophecy better fulfilled, nor ever did barbarous policy prove more fatal to its projectors! The king of Denmark, breathing vengeance for the slaughter of his countrymen, landed in the west of England, and soon reduced the greater part of the A.D. 1003.

15 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

16 Id. ibid.—Hen. Hunting. lib. vi.—Contrary to the testimony of most of our old historians, who represent the massacre of the Danes as universal, Wallingford says that it affected only a military body in the pay of the king. After so great a lapse of time, it is impossible to decide upon the matter with certainty; but, as the kingdoms of Northumberland and East-Anglia were chiefly peopled with Danes, Wallingford's account seems most probable.

realm. The English, sensible what they had to expect from a barbarous and enraged enemy, attempted several times to make a stand; but they were successively betrayed by the Mercian dukes Alfric and Edric. The base and imprudent expedient of money was again tried, till the nation was entirely drained of its treasure, but without effect. The Danes continued their ravages; and Ethelred, equally afraid of the violence of the enemy, and the trea-
A. D. 1013. chery of his own subjects, fled over to his brother-in-law, Richard duke of Normandy, who received him with a generosity that does honour to his memory[17].

Sweyn died soon after Ethelred left England, and before he had time to establish himself in his newly-ac-
A. D. 1014. quired dominions. Ethelred was recalled: but his misconduct was incurable. On resuming the government, he discovered the same incapacity, indolence, cowardice, and credulity, which had so often exposed him to the insults of his enemies: and the English found in Canute, the son of Sweyn, an enemy no less formidable than his father. An army was assembled against him under the command of Edric and prince Edmund. Edric, whom the infatuated king still trusted, continued his perfidious machinations. After endeavouring in vain to get the prince into
A. D. 1015. his power, he found means to disperse the army, and then openly revolted to Canute with forty vessels[18].

Notwithstanding this misfortune, Edmund, whose intrepidity never failed him, collected the remaining force of the kingdom, and was soon in a condition to give the enemy battle. But the king had so often experienced the perfidy of his subjects, that he had lost all confidence in them: he therefore refused to take the field; so that the prince's vigorous measures were rendered altogether ineffectual, the army being discouraged by the timidity of the sovereign. As the north had already submitted to Ca-

17 Hen. Hunting. lib. vi.

18 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

nute's power, Edmund retired to London, determined to maintain the small remains of English liberty. In the mean time his father died, after an inglorious reign of thirty-seven years. A. D. 1016.

Edmund, who received the name of Ironside from his hardy valour, possessed courage and abilities sufficient to have saved his country, if many of the nobles had not been infected with treachery and disloyalty. But this disaffection rendered his best-concerted schemes abortive, and his noblest efforts fruitless. The traitor Edric pretended to return to his duty; and Edmund was induced to give him a considerable command in the army. A battle was soon after fought at Assington in Essex. Edric deserted to the enemy, in the beginning of the day, and occasioned the total defeat of the English army, with a great slaughter of the nobility.

The indefatigable king, however, still had resources. He assembled a new army at Glocester, and was again in a condition to dispute the field; when the Danish and English nobility, equally tired of the struggle, obliged their two leaders to come to terms. The kingdom was divided between them by treaty. Canute reserved to himself the provinces of Mercia, East-Anglia, and Northumberland; the southern parts were assigned to Edmund, who did not long survive the agreement. He was murdered at Oxford by two of his chamberlains, accomplices of Edric, whose treachery made way for the accession of the Danish prince to the throne of England[19]. A.D. 1016.

19 Gul. Malmesb.—Hen. Hunting.

LETTER XIX.

Of the Reigns of the French Kings, from the Accession of Hugh Capet, to the Invasion of England by William Duke of Normandy.

WHILE England changed its line of sovereigns, and Germany its form of government, France also had changed its reigning family, and had become, like Germa- A. D. 987. ny, a government entirely feudal. Each province had its hereditary counts or dukes. He who could only seise two or three small villages paid homage to the usurper of a province; and he who had only a castle held it of the possessor of a town. The kingdom was a monstrous assemblage of members, without any compact body.

Of the princes, or nobles, who held their lands immediately of the crown, Hugh Capet was not the least powerful. He possessed the dukedom of France, which extended as far as Touraine: he was also count of Paris; and the vast domains which he held in Picardy and Champagne gave him great authority in those provinces. He therefore seised the crown on the death of Louis V.[1], and brought more strength to it than he derived from it; for the royal domain was now reduced to the cities of Laon and Soissons, with a few other disputed territories.

The right of succession belonged to Charles, duke of Lorrain, uncle to Louis V.; but the condition of vassal of the empire appeared to the French nobility a sufficient reason for excluding him; and Hugh secured the favour of the clergy by resigning to them the abbeys which had been hereditary in his family. An extreme devotion, real

1 Glab. *Hist. sui Temp.* lib. ii.

or assumed, recommended him to the people: force and address seconded his ambition; and the national aversion against his rival completed its success. He was acknowledged in an assembly of the nobles; he was anointed at Rheims; and he farther established his throne, by associating his son Robert in the government of the kingdom, and investing him with those ensigns of royalty which he prudently denied to himself, as what might give umbrage to men who were lately his equals[2]. A. D. 988.

Disgusted at this usurpation, the duke of Lorrain entered France, made himself master of Laon by assault, and of Rheims by the treachery of archbishop Arnold, his relative. But this unhappy prince was afterwards himself betrayed by the bishop of Laon, and made prisoner for life[3]. A. D. 989.

A council was assembled for the trial of Arnold. He was degraded; and Gerbert, a man of learning and genius, who had been tutor to the emperor Otho III. and to the king's son Robert, was elected archbishop of Rheims. But the court of Rome not being consulted in this transaction, the election was declared void, Arnold was re-established, and Gerbert deposed. The former, however, remained in prison till the death of Hugh, who was more afraid of Arnold's intrigues than of the thunder of the Vatican; while the other, having found an asylum in the court of his pupil Otho, became archbishop of Ravenna, and afterwards pope, under the name of Silvester II.

No other memorable incidents distinguished the reign of Hugh, who conducted all his affairs with great prudence and moderation; and had the extraordinary honour of establishing a new family, and in some measure a new form of government, with few circumstances of violence, and without the effusion of blood. He died in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and the tenth of his A. D. 996.

2 Glab. *Hist. sui Temp.* 3 Sigeberti *Chron.*

reign, and was quietly succeeded by his son Robert, a prince of a less vigorous genius, though not of a less amiable disposition.

The most remarkable circumstance in the reign of Robert, and the most worthy of our attention, is his excommunication by the pope. This prince had espoused Bertha, his cousin in the fourth degree—a marriage not only lawful according to our present ideas, and justified by the practice of all nations, ancient and modern, but expedient for the welfare of the state, she being the sister of Rodolph king of Burgundy. But the clergy, among their other usurpations, had about this time made a sacrament of marriage, and laid the most essential of civil engagements under spiritual prohibitions, which extended even to the seventh degree of consanguinity. The popes politically arrogated to themselvesa special jurisdiction over this first object of society, and that on which all the rest hang. Gregory V. therefore undertook to dissolve the marriage between Robert and Bertha, though it had been authorised by several bishops; and, without examining the cause or hearing the parties, he published an arbitrary decree, which strictly enjoined the separation of the king and queen. As Robert persisted in keeping his wife, he incurred the sentence of excommunication; which, according to cardinal Peter Damien, an historian of those times, had such an effect on the minds of men, that the king was abandoned by all his courtiers, and even by his own domestics, two servants excepted. And these threw to the dogs all the victuals which their master left at meals, and purified, by fire, the vessels in which he had been served: so fearful were they of what had been touched by an excommunicated person[4]! The same cre-

4 Let us not, however, with certain sarcastical historians, represent this mode of inspiring religious terrors as an invention of the Christian priesthood. For Cæsar tells us that, among the ancient Gauls, if any one, whether magistrate or private person, refused to submit to the sentence of the Druids, he was excluded from the

dulous author adds, that the queen was delivered of a monster, which had a neck and head like those of a goose —a certain proof and punishment of incest!—But, as Voltaire justly observes, there was nothing monstrous in all this affair, but the insolence of the pope, and the weakness of the king; who, giving way to superstitious terrors, or afraid of civil commotions, at last repudiated his wife Bertha, and married Constance, daughter to the count of Arles, in whom he found an imperious termagant, instead of an amiable consort. Gregory also obliged him to restore the traitor Arnold to the see of Rheims[5].

In the mean time Robert had it in his power to have been master of the popes, if he had possessed the ambition and the vigour necessary for such an enterprise. After the death of Henry II., the last emperor of the house of Saxony, the Italians offered their crown and the imperial dignity to the king of France. A. D. 1024. Robert, however, had the resolution to refuse it; and not only his own subjects, but Europe in general, were soon convinced that he had acted wisely; for those who made the proposal deserted the person who accepted it[6].

The latter years of Robert's reign was rendered very unhappy by the disorders of his family. He was unfortunate in losing his eldest son Hugh, whom he had associated in the sovereignty; and he was harassed by the attempts of his queen Constance to regulate the succession. Having an aversion against her son Henry, she wished to place her younger son Robert on the throne. But the king, by the advice of a national council, confirmed the succession to Henry, his eldest surviving son. Provoked at this measure, the queen endeavoured to embroil the brothers; but

sacrifices; and that, while under such prohibition, all men shunned him, lest they should suffer by the contagion of his impiety. (Cæs. *Bell. Gall.* lib. vi.) The power of EXCOMMUNICATION, or the authority of debarring the vicious and refractory from religious privileges, is necessary indeed to every body of priests. But it ought to extend no farther, to affect no legal right or civil privilege.

5 Aimon. *Hist.* lib. v.

6 Id. ibid.

they, being united by a sincere friendship, withstood all her irritations. At length, becoming equally the object of her hatred, they retired from court, and took arms in
July 20, 1031. order to obtain a separate establishment[7]. In the mean time the king died, and was succeeded by Henry.

There is not any monarch in the French history more generally or more highly commended than Robert (notwithstanding his weakness of temper), or on whose death the lamentations of all ranks of people were louder or more sincere. The monks spoke the sense of the whole nation, when they deplored his death in these words; "We have "lost a father, who governed us in peace. We lived under "him in security; for he did not oppress, or suffer others "to be guilty of oppression: we loved him, and there was "nobody whom we feared."

Henry I. was twenty-five years of age at his accession to the throne, and, with all the spirit of a young man, he had the sagacity and prudence of one more advanced in years; without which, the crown would have been shaken from his head almost as soon as it was placed upon it. Constance, who hated him, as has been observed, and who was ambitious still to govern, had drawn over to her party a number of lords and bishops, under pretence of supporting the cause of young Robert. Henry, therefore, after some ineffectual struggles, was obliged to take refuge in Normandy, where he was received with all possible respect by duke Robert, who assured him that the treasures and forces of the duchy were at his disposal. Nor were these mere expressions of civility; an army of Normans entered France on one side, while the king and the royal party invaded it on the other. The queen-dowager and her faction were humbled, and Henry recovered all that he had lost. But although this contest ended gloriously for the king, it proved prejudicial to the monarchy; for, as the

7 Glab. *Hist. sui Temp.* lib. iii.

success of the war was chiefly the consequence of the exertions of the Normans, Henry added to the duchy Gisors, Chaumont, Pontoise, and that part of the Vexin which yet remained to the crown[8].

The next affair of importance that occupied the king's attention was the succession to the duchy of Normandy. Duke Robert had thought fit, in compliance with the fashionable devotion of those times, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But before his departure, as he was a prudent prince, though now old and superstitious, he assembled his nobles; and, informing them of his pious purpose, the length of the journey, and the dangers to which he must be exposed, he engaged them to swear allegiance to his natural son William, whom he tenderly loved, and intended for his successor, as he had no legitimate issue. He also recommended the guardianship of this son to two persons in whom he placed the greatest confidence—the king of France, and Alain duke of Bretagne[9]. But these precautions did not prevent many disorders, which a mind not hoodwinked by superstition must have foreseen; arising from the habitual turbulence of the great, the illegitimacy of William, and the pretensions of other branches of the ducal family.

Robert died, as he had apprehended, in his pilgrimage; and left his son rather the heir of his wishes than of his dominions. The licentious nobles, freed from the awe of sovereign authority, broke out into personal quarrels, and made the whole duchy a scene of war and devastation. The duke of Bretagne came to appease their animosities; but, being very roughly treated, he returned home, and was soon after carried off by slow poison, supposed to have been given him in Normandy. Various pretenders to the succession arose; and the king of France, forgetting what he owed to Robert, seemed willing to deprive his infant son of his inheritance, by taking advantage of

A.D. 1035.

8 Gul. Gemet. lib. vi.

9 Id. ibid

these troubles. He accordingly invaded the Norman frontier, and reduced several places; but not finding the conquest so easy as he expected, or influenced by the returning sentiments of friendship and generosity, he

A.D.1046. united his forces with those of the young duke, and the mal-contents were totally routed in the battle of Val de Dunes, which gave William quiet possession of his dominions[10].

Aug. 4. 1060. Henry was succeeded by his son Philip, whom he had by his second wife, the daughter of Jaroslaus or Yaroslaf, grand duke of Russia—a circumstance truly remarkable, in an age when no very familiar intercourse prevailed between distant nations. But the prohibitions of marriage were so multiplied, and the example of his father so alarming, that Henry is supposed to have sought a wife in a remote country, in order to avoid the crime of incest, and the danger of excommunication. What must the disorders of society have been, when even a king did not know whom he might lawfully marry!

Philip I. was only eight years of age at the time of his accession; and, instead of being put under the guardianship of his mother or his uncle, one of whom, it might naturally be supposed, would have been called to the regency, he was committed by his father to the care of Baldwin the Pious, earl of Flanders—a man of strict honour, and brother-in-law to Henry. Baldwin gave his pupil an education suitable to his rank: he kept the nobles in awe, without giving them just cause of offence; and he maintained peace, by being always prepared for war. History, in a word, scarcely furnishes us with an instance of a minority more quiet, or more happy—an example the more remarkable, from the delicacy of the times and circumstances.

The only colour that Baldwin gave for censure, was in his conduct towards William duke of Normandy, who was

10 Gul. Gemet. ubi sub.

preparing to invade England, and whom he permitted to raise forces in France and Flanders—a liberty which, from the event, was judged impolitic. But, the duke being his son-in-law, he could not refuse him with a good grace; and there was yet a further motive for compliance. The fortunate and enterprising William might have entered France with that army which he had assembled against England, where he succeeded more speedily and with greater ease than could have been expected. But the particulars of that invasion and its consequences belong to the history of our own country. I shall therefore only here observe, that, to balance in some measure the increase of William's power, a close alliance was concluded between the crowns of France and Scotland. Soon after that negotiation Baldwin died, and left his pupil Philip I. in peaceable possession of his kingdom, when he had completed his fifteenth year. A. D. 1067.

LETTER XX.

Of the Government of the Kings of England, from the Danish to the Norman Conquest.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, seen Edmund Ironside inhumanly murdered, and England exposed to the ambition of Canute the Dane—a prince both active and brave, and at the head of a numerous army, ready to take advantage of the minority of Edward and Edmund, the sons of the late king. The English could therefore expect nothing but total subjection from Canute. But the Danish monarch, commonly so little scrupulous, showed, on this occasion, an anxiety to conceal his injustice under plausible pretences. Before he seised the inheritance of the two young princes, he summoned a general assembly of the states of England, in order to fix the succession; A. D. 1017.

and, when he had suborned some noblemen to depose that, in the treaty of Glocester, it was agreed, "That Canute, "in case of Edmund's decease, should succeed to the whole "kingdom," the states, convinced by this evidence, or over-awed by his victorious arms, put the Dane in full possession of the government[1].

But although Canute had now attained the great object of his ambition in the undivided sovereignty of England, he was at first obliged to make many sacrifices to it, and to gratify the chief nobility, by bestowing on them extensive governments and jurisdictions. He also thought himself obliged, from political motives, to exercise some severities. In order to reward his Danish followers, he loaded the people with oppressive taxes; and jealous of the two young princes, but sensible that he should render himself detested if he ordered them to be murdered in England, he sent them to his ally the king of Sweden, whom he desired to put them to death. But the Swedish monarch was too generous to comply with such a barbarous request. Afraid, however, to draw on himself the displeasure of Canute, by protecting the English princes, he sent them to be educated in the Hungarian court—a strange place surely to seek for a preceptor. But the defenceless seek only a protector; and the sons of Edmund found one in the king of Hungary[2].

The removal of Edmund's children into a distant country was regarded by Canute, next to their death, as the greatest security of his government. But he was still under alarm on account of Alfred and Edward, the sons of Ethelred, who were protected and supported by their uncle, Richard duke of Normandy. Richard had even fitted out a fleet with a view of procuring the English crown for one of these princes. To avert the storm, and secure himself on that side, Canute paid his addresses to Emma, the duke's sister, and the mother of those princes who disputed his sway. He was

1 Hoved. *Annal.* 2 Hoved. *ad annum* 1017.

listened to: Richard sent over Emma to England, where she was soon after married to Canute, the enemy of her former husband's family, and the conqueror of that country which her children had a right to rule. But Canute promised that her children should still rule it, though not the children of Ethelred; and, although the English disapproved the match, they were pleased to find at court a princess to whom they were accustomed; so that the conqueror, by this marriage, not only secured the alliance of the Normans, but acquired the confidence of his new subjects. Having thus freed himself from the danger of a revolution, Canute determined, like a truly wise prince, to reconcile the English to the Danish yoke by the equity of his administration. He sent back to their own country as many of his followers as could safely be spared: he restored the Saxon customs; he made no distinction between the Danes and the English in the distribution of justice; and he took care, by a strict execution of law, to protect the lives and properties of all his subjects[3]. The Danes were gradually incorporated with the native English; and both were glad to breathe a little from those multiplied calamities which the conquerors no less than the conquered had experienced in their struggle for dominion.

The first use that Canute made of this tranquillity was to visit Denmark, where he obtained a victory over the Swedes, chiefly by the valour of the English under the command of earl Godwin. In another voyage to Denmark, he made himself master of Norway, by expelling Olaus the Saint from his kingdom. Canute seems thus to have attained the height of his ambition; for, from this period, he appears not only to have relinquished all thoughts of future conquest, but to have despised all the glories and pleasures of the world—a necessary consequence, my dear Philip, of assigning to human

A. D. 1019.

A. D. 1028.

3 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.

enjoyments a satisfaction which they cannot yield, and more especially of pursuing them (another effect of the same cause) at the expense of justice and humanity.

During this change of mind it must have been that Canute, the most powerful prince of his time, being sovereign of Denmark, Norway, and England, put to the blush his flattering courtiers, who exclaimed, in admiration of his grandeur, that every thing was *possible* for him. He ordered a chair to be brought, and seated himself on the sea-shore, while the tide was rising; and as the waves approached, he said, in an imperious tone, "Thou, sea! art under "my dominion, and the land upon which I sit is mine: I "charge thee, approach no farther! nor dare to wet the "feet of thy sovereign." He even sat some time in seeming expectation of submission: but as the sea still advanced towards him, and at last began to wash him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and observed, that every creature in the universe is feeble and impotent; and that power resides only with ONE Being, in whose hands are the elements of nature, and who can say to the ocean, "Thus "far shalt thou go, and no farther[4]!"

But although Canute, weary of worldly greatness, began to turn his eyes towards a future state of existence, the spirit which prevailed in that age unfortunately gave a false direction to his piety. Instead of making reparation to the persons whom he had injured by former acts of violence, he built churches, endowed monasteries, and appointed prayers to be said for the souls of those who had fallen in battle against him; and (what was thought by many to be still more meritorious) he undertook a pilgrimage to Rome.

After his return from the continent, he performed nothing memorable, except an expedition against Malcolm king of Scotland, whom he humbled. He left the crown of England to Harold Harefoot, his son

A.D. 1035.

4 *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i.

by his first wife Elgiva, daughter to the earl of Hants, in prejudice of Hardi-canute, his son by queen Emma, to whom he had promised the succession [5].

Harold, after a short reign, was succeeded by his brother Hardi-canute, whose reign was yet shorter. Neither of these princes had any striking qualities; nor did any thing worthy of your notice happen during their reigns. It will therefore be sufficient to observe, that on the death of Hardi-canute, who fell a sacrifice to his brutal intemperance, the English shook off the Danish yoke, and placed Edward, son of Ethelred and Emma, on the throne of his ancestors.

A.D. 1040.

A.D. 1042.

This revolution was effected with great facility; and the mild and equitable government of Edward soon reconciled the Danes, no less than the English, to his sway. The distinction between the two nations vanished. But the English in vain flattered themselves that they were for ever delivered from foreign masters. A little time convinced them that the evil was rather suspended than removed.

Edward had been educated in Normandy; and, as he had contracted a friendship with many of the natives of that country, and a predilection for their manners, the court of England was soon filled with Normans, who were distinguished by the royal favour, and had great influence in the national councils. He had also, it appears, though married to a beautiful woman, made an indiscreet vow of virginity, which rendered his bed sterile, but procured to him from the monks the title of Saint and Confessor: and he is said to have given his kinsman, William duke of Normandy, hopes of succeeding to the English crown. What use that enterprising prince made of this promise, real or pretended, we shall afterward have occasion to see.

In the mean time the English, and particularly the opulent and powerful earl Godwin, became jealous of the pre-

5 *Chron. Sax.*—Hoved.

ference shown to foreigners, and openly revolted. The rebels were humbled: the estates of Godwin and his sons were confiscated; and they were obliged to quit the realm. But they soon after returned, and reduced the king to conditions; the most considerable of which was, that all foreigners should be banished [6].

A.D. 1051.

Godwin's death, which happened about two years after this treaty, prevented him from establishing that authority which he had acquired at the expense of the crown. But his son Harold, who succeeded him in his estates and offices, and who, with an ambition equal to that of his father, was superior to him in address and insinuation, proved no less dangerous to the unsuspecting and unwarlike Edward, whose confidence he had obtained. And the death of Siward, earl of Northumberland, while it enfeebled the royal authority, gave still more consequence to the ambitious Harold. Siward, beside his loyalty and exploits in behalf of the crown, had acquired honour to England, by his successful conduct in the only foreign enterprise undertaken during this reign: and as it is connected with a memorable circumstance in the history of a neighbouring kingdom, as well as with the intrigues of Harold, it doubly deserves our attention.

A.D. 1055.

Duncan, king of Scotland, a prince of a gentle disposition, and some talents, but not possessed of sufficient vigour to govern a turbulent nation distracted by the animosities of the great, had laid himself open to the designs of Macbeth, a potent nobleman, nearly allied to the crown; who, not contented with curbing the king's authority, carried yet farther his traitorous ambition. He murdered his sovereign; usurped the crown; and chased Malcolm, the prince and heir, into England. Siward, whose daughter was married to Duncan, undertook, by Edward's orders, the protection of this unhappy family. He marched with an army into Scotland, defeated and killed the bold

6 Sim. Dunelm.—Hoved.

usurper, and restored Malcolm to the throne of his ancestors. This service, added to his former connexions with the royal family of Scotland, brought great accession to the authority of Siward in the north, and enabled him to be highly useful to Edward, in restraining the ambition of Godwin and his powerful family; but as he had lost his eldest son Osbern in the action with Macbeth, it proved eventually fatal to his house, and hurtful to the crown. His second son, Waltheof, appeared too young, on his father's death, to be entrusted with the government of Northumberland; and Harold's influence obtained that dukedom for Tosti, his own brother[7].

There are two anecdotes related of Siward, which strongly mark his character, and are eminently expressive of that enthusiasm of valour, long so predominant in the house of Northumberland. When informed of his son Osbern's death, he was at first inconsolable. But when, having inquired how he fell, he found that the youth had behaved with great gallantry, and that his wound was in the *breast*, the feelings of the father seemed lost in those of the soldier: his grief was transformed into joy. "Would "to God," exclaimed he, "that I had as many sons as I "have hairs, that I might lose them thus!" And when his own death approached, he ordered himself to be clothed in a suit of complete armour; and, sitting erect on a couch, with a spear in his hand, "In this posture," said he, "the only one worthy of a warrior, I will meet "the tyrant: if I cannot conquer, I shall at least *face* my "enemy[8]."

Tosti behaved so tyrannically in his government of Northumberland, that the people rose against him, and expelled him by force of arms — a circumstance which contributed much to his brother's aggrandisement. Harold was appointed by the king to punish the Northumbrians, and advanced with an army for that purpose; but

7 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii.—Hoved.

8 H. Huntingd. lib. vi.

being met by a deputation from Morcar, whom the provincials wished to have for their governor, and finding that Tosti had acted in a manner unworthy of his station, he returned to the king, and generously persuaded him not only to pardon the rebels, but to confer the earldom on Morcar. He afterward married the sister of that nobleman, for whose brother Edwin he procured the earldom of Mercia. He also undertook an expedition against the Welsh, over whom he placed such princes as he approved.

By these politic and fortunate steps, Harold soon found himself in a condition openly to aspire to the royal succession. He had gained the affections of his countrymen by his lenity to the Northumbrians; he had raised their admiration of his valour by his success in Wales; and so great was his influence, that almost all England was under the command of himself or his friends. His competitors for the succession were Edgar Atheling, the offspring of king Edmund's son Edward, the lawful heir to the crown, and William duke of Normandy, the king's cousin. But the first was a youth whose imbecility was thought sufficient to set aside his claim, and the second a foreigner. Edward's prepossessions rendered him unwilling to support the pretensions of Harold; and his irresolution prevented him from securing the crown to the duke of Normandy, whom he secretly favoured. He therefore died without appointing a successor, being worn out with age and infirmities, and more anxious about obtaining a heavenly than settling his earthly inheritance.

A.D. 1066.

Edward the Confessor was the first who *touched* for the scrofula, hence denominated the King's Evil. The opinion of his sanctity procured belief, among the superstitious vulgar, to this mode of cure: and his successors regarded it as a part of their royalty to support the same idea. The practice was first dropped by the princes of the house of Brunswick, who wisely considered, that such a pretension must be attended with ridicule in the eyes of all men of

cultivated minds, and even become the scorn of an enlightened populace. Posterity are more indebted to Edward for the body of laws which he compiled, and which, on account of their mildness, were long dear to our ancestors.

Though this prince left the succession undecided, it did not long continue so. Harold immediately stepped into the vacant throne; and so well had he taken his measures, that his succession was attended with as little opposition or disturbance as if he had succeeded by the most indisputable hereditary title. The right of Edgar Atheling was scarcely ever mentioned, and still less the claim of the duke of Normandy: the whole nation seemed joyfully to swear allegiance to the new king [9].

The first danger that Harold experienced was from abroad, and from his own brother. Tosti, when expelled from the government of Northumberland, had submitted to a voluntary banishment in Flanders: but no sooner did he hear of the accession of Harold, to whose fortunate ambition he considered himself as having fallen a sacrifice, than he entered into a league with Harfager king of Norway, who invaded England with a fleet of three hundred sail. Tosti himself had collected about sixty vessels in the ports of Flanders, with which he put to sea; and, after committing some depredations on the southern and eastern coasts of England, he sailed to Northumberland, where he was joined by the Norwegian armament. The invaders disembarked at the mouth of the Humber, and defeated the earls of Northumberland and Mercia [10].

Harold was no sooner informed of this disaster than he hastened to the northward, anxious for the safety of his people, and eager to show himself worthy of that crown which had been conferred upon him by his countrymen. The English flocked from all quarters to his standard; so

9 Gul. Pictav.—Order. Vital. 10 H. Huntingd. lib. vii.

that he found himself in a condition to give battle to his foes, as soon as he reached them. The two armies engaged at Stanford-bridge near York. The action, which was long and bloody, terminated in the total rout of the enemy, and in the death of Tosti and Harfager [11]. Harold, however, had scarcely time to rejoice on account of this victory, before he received intelligence that the duke of Normandy had landed with a formidable force in the south of England.

The Norman prince founded his claim to the English crown on a pretended will of Edward the Confessor in his favour. This claim he fortified with an oath extorted from Harold when shipwrecked on the coast of France, importing that he would never aspire to the succession, and that he would even support the pretensions of William. The will Harold knew to be void of foundation, and the oath he entirely disregarded, as it had been drawn from him by the fear of violence. He therefore replied to the Norman ambassadors, who summoned him to resign the kingdom, that he was determined strenuously to maintain those national liberties with which he had been intrusted, and that the same moment should put a period to his life and his sway [12].

This was such an answer as William expected. He knew the valour of Harold, and the power of the English nation; but he consulted only his ambition, and his courage. The boldness of the enterprise, he thought, would astonish his adversaries, and inspire his soldiers with resolution from despair, as well as from a desire of supporting the military reputation of their countrymen.

A martial spirit had at this time diffused itself over Europe; and the feudal nobles, whose minds were elated by their princely situation, eagerly embraced the most hazardous enterprises, how little soever they might be in-

11 Gul. Malmesb. lib. ii. 12 R. Higdeni *Poly-Chronicon.*—Matth. Westm.

terested in the failure or success. Hence arose their passion for chivalry, and their ambition to outshine each other in exertions of strength and prowess. William had long been distinguished among those haughty chieftains by his power, his courage, and his address in all military exercises; and all who were ambitious of acquiring renown in arms repaired to the court of Normandy, where they were entertained with that hospitality and courtesy which dignified the age. The fame of the intended invasion of England had been widely propagated; and, the more perilous the attempt appeared, the more it suited the genius of the times. Multitudes of adventurers, therefore, crowded to tender their service to William, who selected from the whole number as many as, when added to the Norman troops, swelled his army to the amount of 60,000 men.

The continental monarchs could surely have obstructed those supplies. But, Philip of France (whose interest was most likely to be affected by the scheme) being a minor, Baldwin earl of Flanders, William's father-in-law, who then held the reins of government, favoured the duke's levies, as I have had occasion to observe, both in France and Flanders; and the emperor Henry IV., besides giving all his vassals leave to embark in this expedition, promised to defend Normandy during the absence of the duke, and thereby enabled him to draw his whole strength to the attack of England.

But William's most important ally was pope Alexander II., who had an extraordinary influence over the warriors of that age; and who, besides being flattered by an appeal which William had made to the court of Rome on the subject of his undertaking, at a time when this pontiff wished to be the arbiter of princes, foresaw that if the French and Norman barons should be successful in their enterprise, they would import into England, which still maintained some degree of independence in ecclesiastical matters, a

more devoted reverence to the holy see. He therefore declared immediately in favour of William's claim; pronounced Harold a perjured usurper; denounced excommunication against him and his adherents; and, in order more particularly to encourage the duke, he sent him a consecrated banner, and a ring with one of St. Peter's hairs in it. Thus, as the sagacious Hume remarks, all the ambition and violence of this invasion were covered safely over with the broad mantle of religion.

The Norman fleet, which consisted of three hundred vessels, had been assembled early in the summer, and put to sea soon after; but being long detained by contrary winds, the troops began to imagine that Heaven had declared against them, and that, notwithstanding the pope's benediction, they were destined to destruction. The wind, however, fortunately changed on the eve of the feast of St. Michael, the tutelar saint of Normandy; and the soldiers and their bold leaders, who had an equal contempt of real and dread of imaginary dangers, fancying they saw the hand of Providence in the cause of their former terrors, set out with the greatest alacrity, and safely arrived at Pevensey in Sussex, where the troops quietly disembarked. The duke himself had the misfortune to fall, as he leaped on shore—a circumstance which, by his superstitious followers, might have been construed to his disadvantage, but which he had the presence of mind to turn in his favour, by calling aloud, "I have "taken possession of England[13]!"

Harold's late victory proved his ruin. Many of his bravest officers and veteran soldiers fell in the action; many retired from fatigue, and a great number withdrew from discontent, because he had refused to distribute the spoils of the field among them—a conduct little suited to his usual generosity, and which can only be ascribed to a desire of

13 Wace, *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie*.

relieving his people in the war that hung over them from Normandy, and which he foresaw must be attended with great expense.

From the smallness of the king's force, and other circumstances, his brother Girth, a man of bravery and conduct, began to entertain apprehensions of the event; and represented to him that it would be more prudent to prolong the war than to risque a general action, as the winter was approaching, when the enemy would suffer many hardships, while the English, better sheltered, and becoming every day more incensed against their invaders, would hasten from all parts to his assistance, and render his army invincible; or, if he thought it necessary to hazard a battle, he ought at least not to expose his person, that some resource might still be left for the liberty and independence of the kingdom. Harold, however, rejected this advice with disdain; and advanced without delay against the Normans, who had removed their camp to Hastings. He affected to be so confident of success, that he sent a message to the duke of Normandy, offering him a sum of money, if he would retire from the kingdom without effusion of blood; and William equally elate, commanded him to resign the crown of England, to submit their cause to the arbitration of the pope, or to fight him in single combat. Harold replied, that the God of battles would soon be the arbiter of all their differences[14].

Both armies now impatiently expected the awful decision. In the night which preceded the battle, the scene was very different in the two camps. The English passed the time in rioting and feasting; the Normans, in prayer and preparations for the conflict. As soon as the day began to appear, the duke harangued his principal officers in terms suitable to the occasion, and divided his army into three lines. The first consisted

Oct. 14.

14 Gul. Pictav.—Wace.

of archers and light-armed infantry; the second was composed of his bravest battalions, heavy-armed, and ranged in close order. The cavalry, at the head of which William placed himself, formed the third line, and were so disposed, that they stretched beyond the infantry, and flanked each wing of the army. He commanded the signal to be given; and the whole army, moving at once, and singing the celebrated song of Roland, the supposed nephew and renowned captain of Charle-magne, advanced in order of battle[15].

In the arrangement of the English army, Harold seized the advantage of a rising ground, and drew some trenches to secure his flanks. The Kentish men were placed in the front, a post which they had always claimed as their due; the Londoners guarded the standard; and the king, dismounting, placed himself in the centre, at the head of his infantry, expressing his resolution to conquer or die. The first attack of the Norman infantry was terrible: the archers severely galled their adversaries; and, as the English ranks were close, the arrows did great execution. But Harold's army received the shock undismayed; and after a furious struggle, which long remained undecided, the Normans began to give ground. Confusion was spreading from rank to rank; when William, who found himself on the brink of ruin, hastened with a select band to the relief of his broken forces. His presence restored the battle; and the English were obliged to retire in their turn. Finding that they still made a vigorous resistance, the duke ordered his troops to make a hasty retreat, and allure their antagonists from their station by the appearance of flight. The artifice succeeded. Impelled by the enthusiasm of valour and the heat of action, the troops of Harold precipitately followed the Normans into the plain; while William directed his infantry to face about on their pursuers, and the cavalry to make an assault

15 Gul. Malmesb. lib. iii.—Du Cange in *Gloss.* Verb. *Cant. Roland.*

upon their wings. The English were thrown into disorder, and driven back with loss to the hill; where, being rallied by the address of Harold, they were again able to maintain the combat. William tried the same stratagem a second time, and with equal success. Yet he still found a large body of English forces that remained firm around their prince, and seemed determined to dispute the field to the last man; when fortune decided a victory which valour had left doubtful. The king was pierced in the brain with an arrow, while bravely defending the royal standard at the head of his guards; and his two gallant brothers, Girth and Leofwin, were also slain. Dispirited by the loss of their leaders, the English now gave way on all sides, and were pursued with great slaughter by the victorious Normans[16].

Such were the chief features of the battle of Hastings, which terminated the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, and which, by the heroic valour displayed on both sides, seemed worthy to decide the fate of a mighty kingdom. Fifteen thousand of the Normans fell, and a much greater number of the English forces[17].——But we must take a view of the other nations of Europe, and also throw a glance on those of Asia and Africa, before we consider the consequences of this victory, and the influence of the revolution by which it was followed, upon the laws, government, and manners of England. In the mean time, however, it will not be improper to take a slight survey of the state of England at the Norman conquest.

POSTSCRIPT.

NO territory of so small an extent has ever so much engaged the attention of mankind, for so long a series of ages, as the island of Britain. From the most remote antiquity it was visited by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, on ac-

16 Gul. Malmes. ubi sup.—Gul. Pict.—Hoved.—Order. Vital.

17 Gul. Gemet. lib. vii.

count of its tin and other valuable productions. The Romans, in the height of their power, made themselves masters of the southern part of it, at a great expense of blood and treasure; and they thought the acquisition of sufficient importance to induce them to preserve their footing in this distant and transmarine province for three hundred years, by maintaining in it a considerable naval and military force. The ancient Britons lost their courage and their independent spirit under the Roman dominion, but received from their enlightened governors some knowledge of arts and letters[18]. The Saxons, in achieving their sanguinary conquests, destroyed every trace of ingenuity which the Romans had introduced into the island, without bringing one peaceful art, with which the Britons were not better acquainted: and the wars between the princes of the Heptarchy afterward obstructed, among their people, the usual progress of civilisation. But no sooner was England united into one kingdom, under Egbert, than commerce and manufactures began to be cultivated in a country so highly favoured by nature; abounding in the materials of industry, and favoured on three sides by the proximity of the sea, which forms on its coasts many commodious bays and safe harbours[19].

The Anglo-Saxon commerce, however, was cruelly injured by the piratical cruises and predatory invasions of the Danes: yet did England then contain many large trading towns, and a greater number of inhabitants, both in the towns and in the country, than could have been expected in

18 If the Britons had any knowledge of letters before the arrival of the Romans, that knowledge was confined chiefly, if not solely, to their priests, the mysterious Druids.

19 The principal English exports, during the Anglo-Saxon times, were tin, lead, wool, hides, horses, and *slaves!* These slaves consisted not solely of such unhappy persons as the laws of war or other causes had reduced to tha condition of perpetual servitude. The Anglo-Saxons are accused by some contemporary writers, of making merchandise even of their nearest relations——" a custom," adds a respectable historian who lived in the reign of the first Henry, " which prevails in Northumberland " even in our own days." Gul. Malmesb. lib. i.

such a turbulent and hostile period. London, York, Bristol[20], Exeter, and Norwich, were great and populous cities; and as the labours of husbandry were chiefly performed by slaves or villains, who were excluded from military service, the number of freemen in England, *habituated* to the *use* of *arms*, if not greater, must have been as great at the Norman invasion as in any former or subsequent period[21]. But let us not hence conclude, that sixty thousand men, under an experienced leader, have at all times been sufficient to overturn the constitution of this vigorous kingdom. William was ultimately indebted for his good fortune, less to the rashness of the English monarch, his own conduct, or the valour of his troops, than to the unsettled state of the succession to the crown. Harold had owed his exaltation to the throne as much to fear as affection; and, on his death, the English nobility, who had borne with impatience the sway of an equal, naturally looked up to his conqueror and competitor, the

20 The Bristol traders were distinguished, even in those early ages, by their mercantile sagacity. "The people of this town," says an author of undoubted veracity, "were cured of a most odious and inveterate custom by Wulfstan (bishop of Worcester at the Norman conquest), *of buying men and women in all parts of England, and exporting them for the sake of gain. The young women they commonly got with child, and carried them to market in their pregnancy, that they might bring a better price!*" *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii.

21 To that exemption from rustic labour, which was friendly to the use of arms, may also perhaps be ascribed the dissolute manners of the Anglo-Saxons. Unless when employed in war or in hunting, their whole time was spent in drinking and feasting. This licentious life seems to have much impaired the native courage of the English nation, before the Danish conquest. The wars which introduced and accompanied that conquest revived their martial spirit: and under the Danish princes, the Anglo-Saxons appear to have emulated their conquerors in all acts of prowess and valour. But both were alike given to long and excessive drinking, in large societies or clubs: and the Danes added to this convivial intemperance an inordinate passion for women; in which they seem to have gloried, and which they often gratified in a manner shocking to humanity. Violence in love was with them as common as in war. Yet they sometimes made use of other means to accomplish their purpose—they affected gallantry; and, by their attention to dress and cleanliness, are said to have seduced many English wives. That cleanliness, however, by which they were distinguished, consisted only in combing their hair once a day, and washing themselves once a week. Wallingford, ap. Gale, vol. i.—*Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii.

kinsman of their last prince, as their sovereign, their head, and centre of union. The duke of Normandy, at Hastings, had triumphed over their elected king, but not over their liberties. These, when a spirited resistance was yet in their power, they imprudently put into his hands (as we shall afterwards have occasion to see) in the hope that he would not abuse their generosity.

LETTER XXI.

Of the affairs of Spain, the Saracen Empire, and that of Constantinople, during the ninth, tenth, and Part of the eleventh Century.

THE death of Abdarrahman, the Moorish king, whom we have seen reign with so much lustre at Cordova, was followed by dissensions among his children, which procured some relief to the Spanish Christians. The little kingdom of the Asturias (or of Leon, as it was afterwards called), founded by Pelagius, increased under Alphonso III., surnamed the Great, who began to reign in the year 862. About thirty-four years prior to that date, Eneco count of Bigorre had founded the kingdom of Navarre, which became one of the most considerable Christian principalities in Spain.

A.D. 828.

The Moors, however, still possessed more than three-fourths of Spain, and the most fertile provinces. Among them, as among the Christian nations, a crowd of too powerful nobles affected independence, and the sovereign was obliged to contend with his subjects for dominion. This was the time to have crushed the Mohammedan

power: but the Spanish Christians were not more united than their enemies. Though continually at war with the Moors, they were always destroying each other. The reign of Alphonso the Great abounded with conspiracies and revolts: his wife and his two sons were among the number of the rebels. He resigned his crown to Garcias, the elder of those princes; he even generously fought under his command; and died in 911, with the glory of a hero, and the piety of a saint[1]. A.D. 910.

Ramiro II., king of Leon, another Spanish hero, gained the celebrated victory of Simancas, where the Moors, under Abdarrahman III., lost thirty thousand men[2]. Aug. 938. He had promised to St. James, in a pilgrimage to Compostella, that, if he should be victorious, all his subjects should offer annually a certain measure of wheat to the church of that saint. The church was enriched, and the name of St. James became the alarm to battle among the Spaniards.

Men are chiefly indebted for all their heroic achievements to their passions; hence nothing is so irresistible as the valour inspired by enthusiasm, while it continues. The name of St. James was long terrible to the Moors, and long the companion to victory. Mohammed Al-Mansour, however, the celebrated general and prime-minister of Hesham II., king of Cordova, found means, by another artifice, to turn the tide of success. Seeing his troops begin to fly, in a battle fought on the banks of the river Ezla, he dismounted from his horse, sat down in the field, threw his turban on the ground, and laying his arms across his breast, declared that he would in that posture meet his fate, since he was abandoned by his army. This stratagem had the desired effect: his troops returned to the charge, and obtained a complete victory. The Moors became sensible that they could A. D. 995.

1 Ferreras.—Mariana. 2 Mariana, lib. viii.

conquer in spite of St. James; and the Christians in their turn trembled at the name of Al-Mansour.

That great man, who was no less a politician than a warrior, is said to have vanquished the Christian princes in fifty engagements. He took the city of Leon by assault; sacked Compostella; pillaged the church of St. James, and carried the gates in triumph, on the shoulders of his army, to Cordova. This triumph proved his ruin. A flux breaking out among his troops, the Christians considered that distemper as a punishment inflicted by St. James: the flame of enthusiasm was rekindled, and Al-Mansour was defeated. But what was infinitely more advantageous to the Christians, as well as more fatal to himself, he was so much ashamed of his misfortune, that he would neither eat nor drink, and obstinately perished of hunger[3].

A. D. 998.

Before the middle of the eleventh century, the race of Abdarrahman being extinct, the kingdom of Cordova was dismembered by the ambition of a number of noblemen who usurped the regal title. Toledo, Valentia, Seville, Saragossa, and almost all the great cities, had their independent sovereigns. The provinces were changed into kingdoms, which multiplied in the same manner among the Christians, who had a king of Leon, of Navarre, of Castile, of Arragon: and Sancho, surnamed the Great, king of Navarre, was so imprudent as to subdivide his dominions among his four sons. Perpetual jealousies, with all the crimes that accompany them, were the consequence of these divisions of territory—treachery, poisonings, assassinations! the common weapons of petty neighbouring and rival princes, who have much ambition and small means of gratifying it. Hence the history of Spain becomes less important, in proportion to the increase of the

A. D. 1035.

3 Rod. Tolet. de *Reb. Hisp.*—*Annal. Compostel.*

number of kingdoms. One circumstance, however, merits our attention, both on account of its nature and its singularity.

In this dark and oppressive period, when the commonalty of Europe in general were in a degraded and wretched state, the people of Arragon shared the government with their sovereign. The representatives of cities and towns had a place in their cortès, or national assembly. But the Arragonians, not satisfied with this check on the royal prerogative, nor willing to trust the preservation of their liberties solely to their representatives, elected a justiza, or grand judge, who was the supreme interpreter of the laws, and whose particular business it was to restrain the encroachments of the crown, and protect the rights of the subject. He was chosen from among the cavalleros, or second order in the state, answering to our gentry, that he might be equally interested in curbing the oppressive spirit of the nobles, and setting bounds to the ambition of the prince. His person was sacred, and his jurisdiction almost unbounded: his power was exerted in superintending the political administration, no less than in regulating the course of justice. He had a right to review all the royal proclamations and patents, and to declare whether they were agreeable to law, and ought to be carried into execution:—and he could, by his sole authority, exclude any of the king's ministers from the management of affairs, and call them to answer for their conduct in office, while he himself was answerable to the cortès alone. He had also the singular privilege of administering the coronation oath, in the name of the people; when, holding a naked sword opposite to the king's heart, he repeated these remarkable words: "We, who are your equals, make you "our sovereign, and promise obedience to your government, on condition that you maintain our rights and "liberties; if not—not!" And it was accordingly an

established maxim in the constitution of Arragon, that, if the king should violate his engagements, it was lawful for the people to depose him, and to elect another in his stead[4].

From the Arabs in Spain we pass naturally to those of Asia and the neighbouring continent of Africa. The great empire of the Arabs, as well as its branches, had experienced those revolutions which war and discord usually produce, and which sooner or later overturn the best-founded governments. The glory of the khalifate was obscured about the beginning of the tenth century. Under weak or wicked princes, the African governors shook off their allegiance. Religious quarrels augmented those of ambition. The Ismaëlians or Fatimites, a Mohammedan sect, were inflamed with all the fury of fanaticism. A. D. 909. They overthrew the Aglabite dynasty, which governed Tunis and Tripoli; and, after an interval of sixty years, they founded a principality in Egypt. A. D. 969. Cairo, the capital, then became the seat of a new khalif, and a flourishing city of commerce.

Another sect of fanatics, persuaded that the abuses introduced into the religion of Mohammed required reformation, delivered themselves up to the transports of enthusiasm, and acquired strength by being persecuted. They revolted, obtained several victories, and seised the provinces on the north-western coast of Africa, which form the present kingdom of Morocco; where their chief, like the other khalifs, uniting the royalty with the priesthood, governed his new empire under the appellation of Emir-al-Moumenin, or Commander of the Faithful, a title implying his claim to the khalifate.

Other circumstances conspired to dismember the empire of the Arabs. The khalifs of Bagdad had received into their armies a body of Turks, or Turcomans, a Tartar tribe.

4 Zurit, *Annal. de Arrag.*—Hier. Blanca, *Comment. de Rebus Arrag.*

These auxiliaries, on account of their valour, were soon employed as the royal guard, and subjected those whom they were hired to protect. They took advantage of the civil wars raised against the khalifate to make themselves lords of the Asiatic states: they gradually deprived the khalifs of the sovereignty, but permitted them to retain the pontificate, which they affected to revere; prudently submitting to the religion of the country, and kneeling to the priest while they despoiled the king[5].

A variety of sovereigns sprang up under the name of Soltans, who were invested with their dominions by the khalifs, but took care to leave them very little authority; so that the successors of Mohammed found themselves, towards the middle of the eleventh century, in much the same situation with those of St. Peter under the first German emperors, or with the kings of Europe about the same time, whose power declined in proportion to the increase of their vassals.

While the Saracen empire was thus nearly overturned, and that of Charle-magne falling to pieces, the empire of Constantinople, to borrow a simile from Voltaire, still stood like a large tree, vigorous though old, stripped of its branches and even of some of its roots, and buffeted on every side by storms and tempests. Though considerably diminished on the eastern frontier, it yet extended over all Greece, Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Thrace, Illyricum: it was contracted indeed, but not dismembered; often changing its emperors, but always united under the person who swayed the sceptre. How unworthy were these princes, in general, of the imperial dignity! and what a people had they to govern!

Nicephorus, whom we have seen dethrone Irene, was an execrable tyrant. The Saracens robbed him of the isle of Cyprus; and the Bulgarians, the scourge of Thrace, after having cut off his army, beheaded him, and A. D. 811.

5 Leunclav. *Annal. Turcic.*—Elmacin. *Histor. Saracen.*

threw his body to the beasts of the field, while they made a drinking-cup of his skull[6].

Stauratius, the son of Nicephorus, rendered himself so odious in the beginning of his reign, that he was abandoned by his people, and obliged to become a monk.

Michael, who succeeded, refused to make peace with the Bulgarians, because a monk declared that he could not in conscience deliver up the deserters. In consequence of this refusal, the Greeks were defeated by the Bulgarians: the emperor betook himself to flight, and the officers, incensed at his behaviour, proclaimed Leo the Armenian.

Leo attempted to assassinate the king of the Bulgarians, who, in revenge, pillaged the suburbs of Constantinople. The emperor could conceive nothing more effectual to save the state than the extirpation of idolatry; that is to say, the suppression of images. He accordingly commanded a new persecution; and eight hundred and twenty persons were massacred in one church.

Michael II., called the Stammerer, at first tolerated the worship of images: but he afterwards changed his system, persecuted those whom he had formerly protected, and would even have had the sabbath observed, and the passover celebrated in the manner of the Jews. The Saracens took advantage of his weakness to make themselves masters of the isle of Crete, now Candia:
A. D. 823.
they also conquered almost all Sicily, and ravaged Apulia and Calabria[7].

During the reign of Theophilus, though more worthy of the imperial throne, the persecution was redoubled, and the Saracens extended their conquests. But, after his
A. D. 842.
death, the empress Theodora, governing during the minority of Michael III., re-established the worship of images, as Irene had formerly done. Afterward, desirous of converting the Manicheans by terror, she caused them to

6 Theophan. *Chronograph.* 7 Cedreni *Compend.*

be destroyed in thousands. Those who escaped went over to the Bulgarians; and the empire was obliged to contend with its own subjects. Michael confined Theodora in a convent; and, delivering himself up to vice and criminality, carried his impiety so far, as to sport with the ecclesiastical ceremonies. He was assassinated by Basil, whom he had associated in the empire, and imprudently would have deposed. A. D. 867

Basil, originally a beggar, now found himself emperor. He is celebrated for his justice and humanity; but he was a dupe to the patriarch Photius, whom he favoured with his confidence, even after he had exiled him. His reign is the æra of the grand schism which for ever divided the Greek and Latin churches.

This schism, which took its rise from a jealousy between the primates of the East and West, was brought to a crisis by the conversion of the Bulgarians. As Bulgaria had formerly belonged to the eastern empire, it was disputed, whether the new Christians ought to be subject to the pope, or to the patriarch of Constantinople. Other reasons were assigned for the rupture that followed; but this is the true one, and the only one which it is necessary for you to know. The council of Constantinople gave judgement in favour of the patriarch; but the pope's legates protested against the decision. New circumstances widened the breach. The two primates excommunicated each other; and although the quarrel was sometimes moderated by the interposition of the emperors, the schism continued. A. D. 879.

The Saracens took Syracuse, while Basil was employed in founding a church; and his son Leo composed sermons, while the empire was attacked on all sides. Leo, however, was styled the Philosopher, because he loved learning, and favoured learned men, not from being an Alfred or a Marcus Aurelius.

Constantine Porphyrogeneta, the son and successor of

Leo, merits the eulogies bestowed on him, as a protector of the sciences, which he himself cultivated with success. Men of the first rank taught philosophy, geometry, and rhetoric, at Constantinople, during his reign, which commenced in 912, and ended in 959. But the affairs of the empire were not, in general, conducted better than they had formerly been. They were still worse conducted under Romanus, the son of Constantine, who poisoned his father, and was the tyrant of his people.

Nicephorus Phocas had the honour of vanquishing the Saracens, and of recovering from them Crete, Antioch, and other places. His avarice and tyranny, however, rendered him odious: his wife joined in a conspiracy against A. D. 969. him; and he was murdered in bed.

John Zimisces, one of the assassins, seised the empire, and defended it against the Russians and Saracens, whom he defeated in several engagements. This brave prince was poisoned by his chamberlain, after a short A. D. 975. reign.

Basil II. was a warrior, but a barbarous one. Having vanquished the Bulgarians, he caused the eyes of five thousand prisoners to be put out. His subjects, loaded with taxes, could not enjoy his triumphs. He fought for himself, not for them. His death was followed by A. D. 1025. a train of the blackest crimes of which we have any example in history

The princess Zoë, daughter of Constantine, the brother and colleague of Basil, had espoused Romanus Argyropulus, who was proclaimed emperor. Zoë A. D. 1028. afterwards became enamoured of Michael the Paphlagonian, a man of low birth. She poisoned her husband, in order to give the throne to her lover; and, the poison not operating so quickly as she wished, she caused him to be drowned in a bath. The patriarch of A. D. 1034. Constantinople at first scrupled to marry the em-

s Zonaræ *Annal.*—Cedreni *Compend.*

press to Michael: but a sum of money quieted his conscience, and the grant of the crown followed the sanction of the church.

The emperor Michael, a prey to diseases and remorse, died in the habit of a monk; and Zoë procured the imperial crown for Michael Calaphates, the son of a ship-caulker, by a sister of the other Michael, hoping that he would be the slave of her will. But, on the contrary, the new emperor soon put her in confinement. The people revolted: they released Zoë and her sister Theodora, and put out the eyes of Calaphates[9]. A.D. 1041.

The two sisters reigned together about three months, and employed themselves only upon trifles. The people would have a prince; and Zoë then married Constantine Monomachus, one of her ancient lovers, who was placed on the throne. The upstart emperor neglected his wife for a young mistress. The Greeks, incensed at his conduct, seised him in a procession, and declared that they would only obey the two empresses. He would have been cut in pieces, if the princesses had not interposed.

Monomachus augmented the miseries of the empire by his rapacity. The inhabitants of the frontier provinces had been exempted from taxes, on condition that they should defend themselves against the barbarians. The emperor pretended that he would protect them, and compelled them to pay like the rest of his subjects; but they were poorly defended, notwithstanding the taxes.

These particulars will be sufficient to enable you to judge of the state of Constantinople. If at any time we find an able and warlike prince there, we always find the same reigning spirit of superstition and rebellion. Isaac Comnenus, one of the best Greek emperors, was hated by the monks, because he applied to the public exigences the excess of their wealth. Lamed by a fall from his horse, he gave himself up to devotion, resigned A.D. 1059.

9 Zonar.—Cedren.

his crown in favour of Constantine Ducas, and took the habit of a monk.

Ducas, too much a friend to peace, abandoned the provinces to the ravages of the Turks. He made his three sons emperors, and left the regency to their mother Eudoxia, exacting from her a promise that she would never marry; and this promise he obliged her to confirm in writing. Eudoxia, however, soon resolved to marry Romanus Diogenes, whom she had condemned to death, but whose fine person subdued her heart. Her promise, deposited in the hands of the patriarch, now gave her great uneasiness. In order to recover it, she artfully pretended to have fixed her choice on the patriarch's kinsman. This amorous deceit had the desired effect. The writing was restored; and the empress, absolved from her

A. D. 1068.

promise of widowhood, did not fail to take advantage of her release. She immediately married Romanus, and procured him the empire[10].

Could ignorant savages have acted more absurdly? or ruffians obnoxious to public justice more atrociously?— Yet the Greeks were still the most learned and polished people in Europe; and Constantinople, notwithstanding all its misfortunes, its revolutions, and crimes, having never felt the destructive rage of the barbarians, continued to be the largest and most beautiful European city, after the fall of Rome, and the only one where any image of ancient manners or ingenuity remained.

Thus, my dear Philip, we rapidly traverse the wilds of history; where the objects are often confused, rude, and uninteresting. But it is necessary to travel these first stages, in order to arrive at more cultivated fields. We shall soon meet with a new set of objects highly interesting and important; and then a more deliberate survey will be required. In the mean time we must take a review of past ages.

10 Annæ Comnenæ *Alex.*—Nicet. *Hist.*

LETTER XXII.

Of the Progress of Society in Europe, from the Settlement of the Modern Nations to the Middle of the Eleventh Century.

I HAVE already given you, in a particular letter, a sketch of the system of policy and legislation established by the barbarians on their settlement in the provinces of the Roman empire[1]: and I have endeavoured, in the course of my general narration, to mark the progress of society, as it regards religion, laws, government, manners, and literature. But as the history of the human mind is infinitely more important than the detail of events, this letter, my dear Philip, shall be entirely devoted to such circumstances as tend more particularly to throw light upon that subject. I shall also pursue the same method, at different intervals, during the subsequent part of your historical studies.

Though the invaders wanted taste to value the Roman arts, laws, or literature, they generally embraced the religion of the conquered people. And the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity would doubtless have softened their savage manners, had not their minds been already infected by a barbarous superstition. Their former religion, mingling itself with the Christian principles and ceremonies, produced that absurd mixture of violence, devotion, and folly, which so long disgraced the Romish church, and which formed the character of the middle ages. The clergy were gainers, but Christianity was a loser, by the conversion of the barbarians. They rather changed the object than the spirit of their religion.

1 See Letter I.

The druids among the Gauls and Britons, the priests among the ancient Germans, and among all the nations of Scandinavia, possessed an absolute dominion over the minds of men. These people, after embracing Christianity, preserved their veneration for the priesthood. And unhappily the clergy of those times had neither virtue enough to prevent them from abusing, nor knowledge sufficient to enable them to make a proper use of their power. They blindly favoured the superstitious homage: and such of the barbarians as entered into holy orders retained their ignorance and their original prejudices.

The Christian emperors of Rome and Constantinople had enriched the church: they had lavished on it privileges and immunities; and these seducing advantages had contributed to a relaxation of discipline, and the introduction of disorders, more or less hurtful, which had altered the spirit of the Gospel. Under the dominion of the barbarians the degeneracy increased, till the pure principles of Christianity were lost in a gross superstition, which, instead of aspiring to virtuous sanctity, the only sacrifice that can render a rational being acceptable to the great Author of order and excellence, endeavoured to conciliate the favour of God by the same means that satisfied the justice of men, or by those employed to appease their fabulous deities[2].

As the punishments due for civil crimes, among the barbarian conquerors, might be bought off by money, they attempted in like manner to bribe Heaven, by benefactions to the church, in order to supersede all future inquest. And the more they gave themselves up to their brutal passions, to rapine, and to violence, the more profuse they were in this species of good works. They seem to have believed, says the abbé de Mably, that avarice was the first attribute of the Divinity, and that the saints made a traffic of their influence and protection. Hence the

2 Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. i. ii.

bon-mot of Clovis: "St. Martin serves his friends very "well; but he also makes them pay well for his trouble!"

"Our treasury is poor," said Chilperic, the grandson of Clovis; "our riches are gone to the church: the "bishops are the kings!"—And indeed the superior clergy, who, by the acquisition of lands, added the power of fortune to the influence of religion, were often the arbiters of kingdoms, and disposed of the crown while they regulated the affairs of the state. There was a necessity of consulting them, because they possessed all the knowledge that then remained in Europe. The acts of their councils were considered as infallible decrees, and they spoke usually in the name of God; but, alas! they were only men.

As the interest of the clergy clashed with that of the laity, opposition and jealousy produced new disorders. The priests made use of artifice against their powerful adversaries: they invented fables to awe them into submission: they employed the spiritual arms in defence of their temporal goods, and changed the mild language of charity into terrific anathemas. To the thunder of the church, the instrument of so many wars and revolutions, they joined the assistance of the sword. Warlike prelates, clad in armour, combated for their possessions, or to usurp those of others; and, like the heathen priests, whose pernicious influence was founded on the ignorance of the people, the Christian clergy sought to extend their authority by confining all knowledge to their own order. They made a mystery of the most necessary sciences; truth was not permitted to see the light, and reason was fettered in the cell of superstition. Many of the ecclesiastics themselves could scarcely read, and writing was chiefly confined to the cloisters[3], where a blind and interested devotion,

3 Persons who could not write made the sign of the cross in place of their name, in confirmation of any legal deed. (Du Cange, Gloss. ad vocem *Crux*.) Hence the phrase *signing*, instead of *subscribing* a paper.

equally willing to deceive and to believe, held the quill, and where false chronicles and fabulous legends were composed, which contaminated history, religion, and the principles and the laws of society.

Without arts, sciences, commerce, policy, principles, the European nations were all in a barbarous and wretched state. Charle-magne indeed in France, and Alfred the Great in England, endeavoured to dispel this darkness, and tame their subjects to the restraints of law: and they were so fortunate as to succeed. Light and order distinguished their reigns. But the ignorance and barbarism of the age were too powerful for their liberal institutions: the darkness returned, after their time, more thick and heavy than formerly, and settled over Europe; and society again fell into chaos.

The ignorance of the West was so profound, during the ninth and tenth centuries, that the clergy, who alone possessed the important secrets of reading and writing, became necessarily the arbiters and judges of almost all secular affairs. They comprehended within their jurisdiction, marriages, contracts, wills, which they took care to involve in mystery, and by which they opened to themselves new sources of wealth and power[4]. Every thing wore the colour of religion; temporal and spiritual concerns were confounded; and from this unnatural mixture sprang numerous abuses. The history of those ages forms a satire on the human soul; and also on religion, if we should impute to it the faults of its ministers.

"Redeem your souls from destruction," says St. Egidius, bishop of Noyon, "while you have the means in "your power: offer presents and tithes to churchmen; "come more frequently to church; humbly implore the "patronage of the saints; for, if you observe these things, "you may come with security in the day of the tribunal of

4 Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.* tome xix. *Disc. Prelim.*

"the Eternal Judge, and say, Give us, O Lord, for we "have given unto thee[5]!"

In several churches of France a festival was celebrated in commemoration of the Virgin Mary's flight into Egypt. It was called the Feast of the Ass. A young girl richly dressed, with a child in her arms, was placed upon an ass superbly caparisoned. The ass was led to the altar in solemn procession. High mass was said with great pomp. The ass was taught to kneel at proper places; a hymn, no less childish than impious, was sung in his praise: and when the ceremony was ended, the priest, instead of the usual words with which he dismissed the people, brayed three times like an ass; and the people, instead of the usual response, brayed three times in return[6].

Letters began to revive in the eleventh century, but made small progress till near its close. A scientific jargon, a false logic, employed about words, without conveying any idea of things, composed the learning of those times. It confounded all things, in endeavouring to analyse every thing. As the new scholars were chiefly clergymen, theological matters engaged the greatest share of their attention; and as they neither knew history, philosophy, nor criticism, their labours were as futile as their inquiries, which were equally disgraceful to reason and religion. The conception of the blessed Virgin, and the digestion of the eucharist, were two of the principal objects of their speculation: and out of the last a third arose, which was, to know whether it was voided again[7]?

The disorders of government and manners kept pace, as they always will, with those of religion and learning. These disorders seem to have attained their utmost height about the middle of the tenth century. Then the feudal policy, the defects of which I have pointed out[8], was almost universal. The dukes or governors of provinces, the

5 *Spicileg. Vet. Script.* vol. ii.

6 Du Cange, ad voc. *Festum.*

7 *Hist. Littéraire de France.*

8 Letter II.

marquises employed to guard the marches or borders, and even the counts entrusted with the administration of justice, all originally officers of the crown, had made themselves masters of their duchies, marquisates, and counties. The king indeed, as superior lord, still received homage from them for those lands which they held of the crown, and which, in default of heirs, returned to the royal domain. He had the right of calling them out to war, of judging them in his court by their assembled peers, and of confiscating their estates in case of rebellion; but, in all other respects, they themselves enjoyed their rights of royalty. They had their sub-vassals, or subjects: they made laws, held courts, coined money in their own names, and levied war against their private enemies[9].

The most dreadfuldisorders arose from this state of feudal anarchy. Force decided disputes of every kind. Europe seemed to be one great field of battle, where the weak struggled for freedom, and the strong for dominion. The king was without power, and the nobles without principle: they were tyrants at home, and robbers abroad. Nothing remained to be a check upon ferocity and violence. The Tartars in their deserts could not be less indebted to the laws of society than the Europeans during the period under review. The people, the most numerous as well as the most useful class in the community, were either actual slaves, or exposed to so many miseries, arising from pillage and oppression, that many of them made a voluntary surrender of their liberty for bread and protection[10]. What must have been the state of that government where slavery was an eligible condition!

But, conformably to the observation of the philosophic Hume, there is a point of depression as well as of exaltation, beyond which human affairs seldom pass, and from which they naturally return in a contrary progress. This

9 Du Cange, ad voc. *Feudum.*

10 Marculf. lib. ii. cap. 8.

utmost point of decline society seems to have attained in Europe, as I have already said, about the middle of the tenth century; when the disorders of the feudal government, together with the corruption of taste and manners consequent upon these, had arrived at their greatest excess. Accordingly from that æra we can trace a succession of causes and events, which, with different degrees of influence, contributed to abolish anarchy and barbarism, and introduce order and politeness.

Among the first of these causes we must rank chivalry; which, as the elegant and inquisitive Dr. Robertson remarks, though commonly considered as a wild institution, the result of caprice and the source of extravagance, arose naturally from the state of society in those times, and had a very serious effect in refining the manners of the European nations.

The feudal state, as has been observed, was a state of perpetual war, rapine, and anarchy. The weak and unarmed were constantly exposed to insults or injuries. The power of the sovereign was too limited to prevent these wrongs, and the legislative authority too feeble to redress them. There was scarcely any shelter from violence and oppression, except what the valour and generosity of private persons afforded: and the arm of the brave was the only tribunal to which the helpless could appeal for justice. Traders could no longer travel in safety, or bring unmolested their commodities to market. Every possessor of a castle laid them under contribution; and many not only plundered the merchants, but carried off all the women that fell in their way. Slight inconveniences may be overlooked or endured; but, when abuses grow to a certain height, the society must be reformed or go to ruin. It becomes the business of all to discover and to apply such remedies as will most effectually remove the prevailing disorders. Humanity sprang from the bosom of violence, and relief from the hand of rapacity. Those licentious and tyrannic nobles,

who had been guilty of every species of outrage and every mode of oppression; who, equally unjust, unfeeling, and superstitious, had made pilgrimages, and had been guilty of pillage! who had massacred, and had done penance! touched at last with a sense of natural equity, and swayed by the conviction of a common interest, formed associations for the redress of private wrongs, and the preservation of public safety[11]. So honourable was the origin of an institution generally represented as whimsical.

The young warrior among the ancient Germans, as well as among the modern knights, was armed, for the first time, with certain ceremonies proper to inspire martial ardour: but chivalry, considered as a civil and military institution, is as late as the eleventh century. The previous discipline and solemnities of initiation were remarkable. The novice in chivalry was educated in the house of some knight, commonly a person of high rank, whom he served first in the character of a page, and afterwards of esquire: nor was he admitted to the supreme honour of knighthood, until he had given many striking proofs of his valour and address. The ceremony of initiation was very solemn. Severe fastings, and nights spent in a church or chapel in prayer; confession of sins, and the receiving the sacraments with devotion; bathing, and putting on white robes, as emblems of the purity of manners required by the laws of chivalry; were necessary preparations for this ceremony.

When the candidate for knighthood had gone through these and other formalities, he fell at the feet of the person from whom he expected that honour, and on his knees delivered to him his sword. When he had answered suitable questions, the usual oath was administered to him; namely, to serve his prince, defend the faith, protect the persons and reputations of virtuous ladies, and to rescue, at the hazard of his life, widows, orphans, and all unhappy persons groaning under injustice or oppression. Then the knights

11 *Mém. sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, par M. de la Curne de St. Palaye.

and ladies, who assisted at the ceremony, adorned the candidate with the armour and ensigns of chivalry; first putting on the spurs, and, after intermediate investments and decorations, girding him with the sword. Seeing him thus accoutred, the king or some nobleman who was to confer the honour of knighthood, gave him the *accolade*, or dubbing, by three gentle strokes with the flat part of the sword on the shoulder, or with the palm of the hand on the neck, saying, "In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. "George, I make thee a knight! be thou loyal, brave, and "hardy[12]."

Valour, humanity, courtesy, justice, honour, were the characteristics of chivalry; and to these we may add religion, which, by infusing a large portion of enthusiastic zeal, carried them all to a romantic excess, wonderfully suited to the genius of the age, and productive of the greatest and most permanent effects both upon policy and manners. War was carried on with less ferocity, when humanity, no less than courage, began to be deemed the ornament of knighthood, and knighthood a distinction superior to royalty, and an honour which princes were proud to receive from the hands of private gentlemen; more gentle and polished manners were introduced, when courtesy was recommended as the most amiable of knightly virtues, and every knight devoted himself to the service of some lady; and violence and oppression decreased, when it was accounted meritorious to check and to punish them. A scrupulous adherence to truth with the most religious attention to the performance of all engagements, particularly those between the sexes, as more easily violated, became the distinguishing character of a gentleman; because chivalry was regarded as the school of honour, and inculcated the most delicate sensibility with respect to that point[13]. And valour, seconded by so many

12 *Mém. sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, par M. de la Curne de St. Palaye.

13 This sentiment became reciprocal. Even a princess, says Tirant le Blanc, declares, that she submits to lose all right to the benefits of chivalry, and con-

motives of love, religion, and virtue, became altogether irresistible.

That the spirit of chivalry often rose to an extravagant height, and had sometimes a pernicious tendency, must however be allowed. In Spain, under the influence of a romantic gallantry, it gave birth to a series of wild adventures, which have been deservedly ridiculed: in the train of Norman ambition, it extinguished the liberties of England, and deluged Italy in blood; and we shall soon see it, at the call of superstition, and as the engine of papal power, desolate Asia under the banner of the cross. But these violences, resulting from accidental circumstances, ought not to be considered as arguments against an institution laudable in itself, and necessary at the time of its establishment. And they who pretend to despise it, the advocates of ancient barbarism and ancient rusticity, ought to remember, that chivalry not only first taught mankind to carry the civilities of peace into the operations of war, and to mingle politeness with the use of the sword, but roused the human soul from its lethargy; invigorating the human character, even while it softened it; and produced exploits which antiquity cannot parallel. Nor ought they to forget, that it gave variety and elegance, and communicated an increase of pleasure, to the intercourse of life, by making woman a more essential part of society; and is therefore entitled to our gratitude, though the point of honour, and the refinements in gallantry, its more

sents that never any knight shall take arms in her defence, if she keeps not the promise of marriage, which she has given to the knight who adored her. And a young gentlewoman, whose defence was undertaken by Gerard de Nevers, beholding the ardour with which he engaged in it, took off her glove, we are told, and delivered it to him, saying, "Sir, my person, my life, my lands, and my honour, I deposit "in the care of God and you; praying for such assistance and grace, that I may "be delivered out of this peril." (M. de la Curne de St. Palaye, ubi sup.) Many similar examples might be produced of this mutual confidence, the basis of that elegant intercourse between the sexes, which so remarkably distinguishes modern from ancient manners.

doubtful effects, should be excluded from the improvements in modern manners.

But the beneficial effects of chivalry were strongly counteracted by other institutions of a less social kind. Some persons of both sexes, of most religions and most countries, have in all ages secluded themselves from the world, in order to acquire a reputation for superior sanctity, or to indulge a melancholy turn of mind, affecting to hold converse only with the Divinity. These solitary devotees, however, in ancient times, were few; and the spirit of religious seclusion, among the heathens, was confined chiefly to high southern latitudes, where the heat of the climate favours the indolence of the cloister. But the case has been very different in more modern ages: for although the monastic life had its origin among the Christians in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, it rapidly spread not only over all Asia and Africa, but also over Europe, and penetrated to the most remote corners of the North and West, almost at the same time that it reached the extremities of the East and South; to the great hurt of population and industry, and the obstruction of the natural progress of society[14].

Nor were these the only consequences of the passion for pious solitude. As all who put on the religious habit, after the monastic system was completely formed, took a vow of perpetual chastity, the commerce of the sexes was represented by those holy visionaries as inconsistent with Christian purity; and the whole body of the clergy, in order to preserve their influence with the people, found themselves under the necessity of professing a life of celibacy. This condescension, which was justly considered as a triumph by the monks, increased their importance, and augmented the number of their fraternities. Nothing was esteemed so meritorious, at this period, as the building and endowing of monasteries. And multitudes of men and women of all

14 Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. i. ii.

conditions, but especially of the higher ranks, considering the pleasures of society as seducers to the pit of destruction, and turning with horror from sensual delight, retired to mountains and deserts, or crowded into cloisters, where, under the notion of mortifying the body, and shutting all the avenues of the soul against the allurements of external objects, they affected an austerity that gained them universal veneration, and threw a cloud over the manners of the Christian world.

The extravagance to which both sexes are said to have carried that austerity, during the first fervours of monastic zeal, seems altogether incredible to cool reason, unenlightened by philosophy. In attempting to strip human nature of every amiable and ornamental quality, in order to humble pride, and repress the approaches of loose desire, or, in their own phrase, "to deliver the *celestial spirit* from the "*bondage* of *flesh* and *blood*," they in a manner divested themselves of the human character. They not only lived among wild beasts, but, after the manner of those savage animals, ran naked through the lonely deserts with a furious aspect, and lodged in gloomy caverns; or grazed in the fields like the common herd, and like cattle took their abode in the open air[15]. And some monks and holy virgins, by the habit of going naked, became so completely covered with hair, as to require no other veil to modesty. Many chose their rugged dwelling in the hollow side or narrow cleft of some rock, which obliged them to sit or stand in the most painful and emaciating posture, during the remainder of their wretched lives; while others, with no small exultation, usurped the den of some ferocious brother brute, whom they affected to resemble; and not a few, under the name of Stylites, or Pillar-saints, ascended the top of some lofty column, where they remained for years, night and day, without any shelter from heat or cold[16].

15 Mosheim, vol. ii.——Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tome viii.

16 Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tome viii.

Even after religious houses had been provided for the devout solitaries of both sexes, and endowed with ample revenues by the profuse superstition of the newly converted barbarians, they attempted, in their several cells, to extinguish every spark of sensuality, by meagre fastings, bloody flagellations, and other cruel austerities of discipline. But no sooner did the monastic fury subside, than nature began to assert her empire in the hearts of the deluded fanatics; to tell them they had wants inconsistent with their engagements, and that, in abandoning society, they had relinquished the most essential requisites of human happiness. The holy sisters and brothers, convinced of their piousfolly, endeavoured by tender familiarities to console each other, but without violating, as they affirmed, their vow of chastity[17]. And although this commerce was prohibited[18], as alike scandalous and dangerous, by resembling too nearly the ways of the world, and provoking sensibilities too strong for the curb of restraining grace, other solacing practices took place in the convents, not more for the honour of the monastic life[19]. Whenever any set of people, by laying a constraint upon the natural appetites, seek to arrive at a degree of purity inconsistent with the welfare of society, they never fail to be guilty of crimes which society disclaims, and nature abhors, unless they relax the rigour of their institutions, or slide back, by a less criminal corruption, into the more smooth but slippery paths of erring humanity.

The ignorance of the times, however, favoured by certain circumstances, continued the veneration for religious solitude, notwithstanding the licentiousness of the monks. Many new monastic orders were instituted in the eleventh

17 Mosheim, ubi sup.

18 The sixth general council (canon xvii.) forbade woman to pass the night in a male, or men in a female monastery. And the seventh general council (canon xx.) prohibited the erection of double or promiscuous monasteries of both sexes.

19 Mosheim, vol. ii.

century, under various rules of discipline; but all with a view to greater regularity of manners. And monks were called from the lonely cell to the most arduous and exalted stations; to fill the papal chair, and support the triple crown; or to discharge the office of prime minister in some mighty kingdom, and regulate the interests of nations. Though utterly ignorant of public transactions, their reputation for superior sanctity, which was easily acquired, by real or affected austerity, in ages of rapine and superstition, made them be thought fit to direct all things. This spiritual reputation even enabled them to trample upon the authority, and insult the persons, of the princes whose government they administered; especially if the lives of such princes, as was very commonly the case, happened to be stained with any atrocious acts of lust, violence, or oppression. In order to stay the uplifted arm of divine justice, and render the Governor of the World propitious, the king knelt at the feet of the monk and the minister—happy to commit to the favourite of Heaven the sole guidance of his spiritual and temporal concerns[20]. And if chivalry, by awakening a spirit of enterprise, had not roused the human powers to deeds of valour, and revived the passion for the softer sex, by connecting it with arms, and separating it from gross desire, Europe might have sunk under the tyranny of a set of men, who pretended to renounce the world and its affairs, and Christendom have become but one great cloister.

20 Beside the wealth and influence acquired by the monks, in consequence of the superstitious ignorance of the great, who often shared not only their power, but the fruits of their rapine, with their pious directors, a popular opinion which prevailed toward the close of the tenth century contributed greatly to augment their opulence. The thousand years, from the birth or death of Christ, mentioned by St. John in the book of Revelations, were supposed to be nearly accomplished, and the day of judgement at hand. Multitudes of Christians, therefore, anxious only for their eternal salvation, delivered over to the monastic orders all their lands, treasures, and other valuable effects, and repaired with precipitation to Palestine, where they expected the appearance of Christ on Mount Sion. Mosheim, vol. ii.

LETTER XXIII.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, under Conrad II. and his Descendants of the House of Franconia.

WE now, my dear Philip, return to the great line of history, which I shall endeavour to trace with accuracy, that you may be able to keep in view the train of events, without which you will neither be able to reason distinctly on them yourself, nor to understand clearly the reasonings of others. I shall therefore bring down the history of the German empire to the death of Henry V., when the quarrel between the popes and the emperors came to a stand, before I speak of the affairs of France and England, which, from the Norman conquest became inseparably interwoven, but had little influence for some centuries on the rest of Europe.

Great disputes ensued on the death of Henry II., about the nomination of a successor to the empire, as that prince died without issue. The princes and states assembled in the open fields, between Mentz and Worms, no hall being sufficient to hold them; and, after six weeks' encampment and deliberation, they elected Conrad, duke of Franconia, surnamed the Salic, because he was born on the banks of the river Sala[1]. A. D. 1024.

Being informed of a revolt of the Lombards, the new emperor marched into Italy; and having reduced the rebels by force of arms, he went to Rome, where he was consecrated and crowned by pope John XX. He was soon obliged to return to Germany, as an insurrection had broken out in his absence. Before he attempted to humble the insurgents, he procured the sanction of the diet A. D. 1027.

1 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.

to the succession of his son Henry, who was solemnly crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. The rebellion was quickly suppressed by the valour of Conrad, who defeated the authors of it in several engagements; in one of which, Ernest, duke of Suabia, who had been put to the ban of the empire, was slain[2].

The word *ban* originally signified banner, afterwards edict, and lastly, a declaration of outlawry, which was intimated thus: "We declare thy wife a widow, thy children orphans, and send thee, in the name of the devil, "to the four corners of the earth." This is one of the first examples of that proscription.

The emperor next turned his arms against the Poles, and afterwards against the Huns, and obliged both to subscribe to his own conditions. In the mean time, Rodolph III., the last king of Transjurane Burgundy and Provence, dying without issue, left his dominions to Conrad. While he was employed in taking possession of his new territories, the Poles again took up arms. When he had met with success against them, he was called into Italy to suppress a revolt, excited by Hubert, bishop of Milan, whom he had loaded with favours. He was so quick in his motions, that he took Milan by surprise. The bishop was condemned to perpetual banishment; and the emperor died soon after his return to Germany, with the character of a just, generous, and magnanimous prince[3].

A.D. 1039.

Henry III., surnamed the Black, now became emperor. In the earlier part of his reign, he was engaged in wars with Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary; which, however, produced no very remarkable incidents. Rome and Italy, as usual, were involved in confusion, and distracted by factions, particularly those of the Pandolphi and the Ptolemei. The Pandolphi had thrust Benedict IX., a boy of twelve years of age, into the papacy. He was deposed by the Ptolemei

2 Heiss, lib. ii. 3 Id. ibid.

and the people, who substituted in his place Sylvester III. This pontiff was deposed, in his turn, by the Pandolphi, and his rival re-established. Benedict, however, finding himself universally despised, voluntarily resigned in favour of John, arch-priest of the Roman church; but afterwards repenting of his resignation, he aimed at the resumption of his dignity. A. D. 1044.

These three popes, supported by their several partisans, and living peaceably with each other, maintained themselves each upon a different branch of the revenues of the holy see. One resided at St. Peter's, another at Santa Maria Major, and the third in the palace of the Lateran, all leading the most profligate and scandalous lives. A priest, called Gratian, at last put an end to this extraordinary triumvirate. Partly by artifice, partly by presents, he prevailed upon all three to renounce their pretensions to the papacy; and the people of Rome, out of gratitude for so signal a service to the church, chose him pope, under the name of Gregory VI.

Henry III. took umbrage at this election, in which he had not been consulted, and marched with an army into Italy. No emperor ever exercised more absolute authority in that country. He deposed Gregory, as having been guilty of simony, and filled the papal chair with his own chancellor, Suideger, bishop of Bamberg, who assumed the name of Clement II., and afterward consecrated, at Rome, Henry and the empress Agnes[4]. After this ceremony, the Romans having sworn never to elect a pope without the approbation of the reigning emperor, Henry proceeded to Capua, where he was visited by Drogo or Draco, Rainulphus, and other adventurers, who, having left Normandy at different times, had made themselves masters of great part of Apulia and Calabria, at the expense of the Greeks and Saracens. Henry entered into a treaty with them; A. D. 1046. A. D. 1047.

4 Muratori, *Annal. d'Ital.*—Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii.

and not only solemnly invested them with those territories which they had acquired by conquest, but prevailed on the pope to excommunicate the Beneventines, who had refused to open their gates to him, and bestowed that city and its dependencies, as fiefs of the empire, upon the Norman princes, provided they took possession by force of arms[5]. What use they made of the imperial favour we shall afterwards have occasion to see. At present the papacy claims our whole attention.

Clement II. was succeeded in the apostolic see by Damasus II.; on whose death, Henry nominated Bruno, bishop of Toul, to the vacant chair. Bruno immediately assumed the pontificals; but, being a modest and pious prelate, he threw them off, by the persuasion of Hildebrand, an aspiring monk, and went to Rome as a private man. "The emperor alone," said Hildebrand, "has "no right to create a pope." He accompanied Bruno to Rome, and secretly retarded his election, that he might arrogate to himself the merit of obtaining it[6]. The scheme succeeded to his wish. Bruno, who took the name of Leo IX., believing himself indebted to Hildebrand for the pontificate, favoured him with his particular friendship and confidence; and hence originated the power of this enterprising monk, of obscure birth, but boundless ambition, who so long governed Rome, and whose zeal for the exaltation of the church occasioned so many troubles to Europe.

A. D. 1048.

Leo, soon after his elevation, waited on the emperor at Worms, to crave assistance against the Norman princes, who were become the terror of Italy, and treated their subjects with great severity. Henry furnished the pope with an army; at the head of which his holiness marched against the Normans, after having excommunicated them, accompanied by a great number of bishops and other ecclesiastics, who were all either killed or made prisoners, the Germans and Italians being totally routed.

A. D. 1053.

5 *Hist. Conq. Norm.* 6 Leonis Ostiens. *Hist.* lib. ii.—Dithmar. *Vit. Greg. VII.*

Leo himself was led captive to Benevento, of which the Normans were now masters, and which Henry had granted to the pope in exchange for the fief of Bamberg in Germany. The Norman chiefs, however, who had a right to that city by a prior grant, restored it, in the mean time, to the princes of Lombardy; and the holy father was treated with so much respect by the conquerors, that he revoked the sentence of excommunication, and joined his sanction to the imperial investiture for the lands which they held in Apulia and Calabria[7].

Leo died soon after his release; and the emperor, about the same time, caused his infant son, afterwards the famous Henry IV., to be declared King of the Romans, a title still in use for the acknowledged heir of the empire. Gebhard, a German bishop, was elected pope, under the name of Victor II., and confirmed by the address of Hildebrand, who visited the emperor for that purpose, though he disdained to consult him previously on the subject. Perhaps Hildebrand would not have found this task so easy, had not Henry been involved in a war with the Hungarians, who severely harassed him, but whom he obliged at last to pay a considerable tribute, and furnish him annually with a certain number of fighting men. A.D. 1054.

As soon as the emperor had finished this war, and others to which it gave rise, he marched into Italy to inspect the conduct of his sister Beatrice, widow of Boniface marquis of Mantua, and made her prisoner. She had married Gozelo, duke of Lorrain, without the emperor's consent; and contracted Matilda, her daughter by the marquis of Mantua, to Godfrey duke of Spoleto and Tuscany, Gozelo's son by a former marriage. This formidable alliance justly alarmed Henry; he therefore attempted to dissolve it by carrying his sister into Germany, where he died soon after his return. A.D. 1056.

7 Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

This emperor, in his last journey to Italy, concluded an alliance with Contarini, doge of Venice. That republic was already rich and powerful, though it had only been enfranchised in the year 998 from the tribute of a mantle of cloth of gold, which it formerly paid, as a mark of subjection, to the emperors of Constantinople. The Genoese were the rivals of the Venetians, in power and in commerce, and were already in possession of the island of Corsica, which they had taken from the Saracens[8].

Henry IV., surnamed the Great, was only five years old at his father's death. He was immediately acknowledged emperor in a diet of the princes convoked at Cologne, and the care of his education was committed to his mother Agnes, who also governed the empire. She was a woman of spirit and address, and discharged both her public and private trust with diligence and ability.

Germany, during the first years of this reign, was harassed with civil wars; so that the empress Agnes, notwithstanding her strong talents, found it difficult to maintain her authority. And at length the dukes of Saxony

A.D. 1062. and Bavaria, uncles of the young emperor, took him from her by stratagem, accusing her of having sacrificed the public welfare to the will of the bishop of Augsberg, her minister and supposed gallant. Thus divested of the regency, she fled to Rome, and there took the veil[9].

Henry was now put under the tuition of the archbishops of Cologne and Bremen, who discharged their trust in a very opposite manner. The first endeavoured to inspire him with a love of learning and virtue, while the second sought only to acquire an ascendency over his passions, by indulging him in all the pleasures of youth. This indulgence produced a habit of licentiousness which he could never afterwards restrain.

Italy was a prey, as usual, to intestine disorders. After

8 Muratori, *Annal. d'Ital.* vol. vi.

9 *Annal. de l'Emp.*

a variety of troubles, excited on account of the pontificate, Nicholas II., the creature of Hildebrand, passed a famous decree, by which it was ordained, in a council of a hundred and thirteen bishops, that for the future the cardinals only should elect the pope, and that the election should be confirmed by the rest of the Roman clergy and the people: "saving the honour," he added, "due to our dear "son Henry, now king; and who, if it please God, shall "one day be emperor, according to the privilege which "we have already conferred upon him; and saving the "honour of his successors on whom the apostolic see shall "confer the same high privilege[10]."

The same pope, after having in vain excommunicated the Norman princes, made protectors and vassals of them; and they, who were feudatories of the empire, less afraid of the popes than the emperors, readily did homage for their lands to Nicholas, in 1059, and agreed to hold them of the church[11].

This mode of tenure was very common in those days of rapacity, both for princes and private persons, the only authority then respected being that of the church: and the Normans wisely made use of it as a safeguard against the emperors. They gave their lands to the church under the name of an oblation or offering, and continued to possess them on paying a slight acknowledgement. Hence arose the pope's claim of superiority over the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily.

Robert Guiscard, the Norman warrior, one of the gallant sons of Tancred of Hauteville, received from the pope the ducal crown of Apulia and Calabria; and Richard, count

10 *Chronicon Farsense* in Murat. *Script. Rer. Ital.* vol. ii.—To this edict the cardinals owe the extensive authority and important privileges which they still enjoy. Under the name of *Cardinals* the pope comprehended the seven Roman bishops, who were considered as his suffragans, and also the twenty-eight presbyters, or parish priests, who officiated in the principal churches. Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii.

11 Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

of Aversa, was confirmed prince of Capua, a title which he had already assumed. The pope also gave the Normans a right to hold Sicily in the same manner with their other possessions, provided they could expel the Saracens from it[12]: and Robert and his brother Roger made themselves masters of that island about the year 1070.

When Henry IV. had assumed the reins of government, he resolved to repress the robberies and extortions, which the subjects of the duke of Saxony exercised upon strangers, as well as upon each other. But the princes and nobles, who were gainers by these abuses, particularly by the infamous practice of imprisoning travellers, and making them pay for their ransom, opposed the intended reformation, and entered into an association against the emperor, under pretence that their liberties were in danger. In this rebellious disposition they were encouraged by the arrogance of pope Alexander II., who, at the instigation of Hildebrand, summoned Henry to appear before the tribunal of the holy see, on account of his loose life, and to answer to the charge of having exposed the investiture of bishops to sale[13].

A.D. 1072.

Henry treated the pope's mandate with contempt, and carried on the war with vigour against the Saxons, whom he totally routed in a bloody engagement, which was followed by the conquest of Saxony. The leaders of the rebellion asked pardon of the emperor in public, and begged to be restored to his favour: he generously accepted their submission, and peace was restored to Germany.

A.D. 1074.

But Henry was not suffered long to enjoy the fruits of his valour. A new storm threatened him from Italy, which afterwards fell with violence on his head, and shook all the thrones in Christendom. On the death of Alexander II.,

12 Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

13 Leonis Ostiens. *Hist.* lib. iii.—Dithmar. *Vit. Greg. VII.*

in 1073, Hildebrand had been elected pope, under the name of Gregory VII., and although he had not asked the emperor's voice, he prudently waited for his confirmation before he assumed the tiara. He obtained it by this mark of submission: Henry confirmed his election; and Gregory then pulled off the mask. He began his pontificate with excommunicating every ecclesiastic who should receive a benefice from a layman, and every layman by whom such benefice should be conferred. This was engaging the church in an open war with the sovereigns of all the Christian nations. But the thunder of the holy see was more particularly directed against the emperor; and Henry, sensible of his danger, and willing to avert it, wrote a submissive letter to Gregory, who pretended to take him into favour, after having severely reprimanded him for the crimes of simony and debauchery, of which he now confessed himself guilty [14].

Gregory, at the same time, proposed a crusade, in order to deliver the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels; offering to head the Christians in person, and desiring Henry to serve as a volunteer under his command [15]! —a project so wild and extravagant, that nothing but the prevailing spirit of the times, the double enthusiasm of religion and valour, can save the memory of its author from the imputation of insanity.

Gregory's project of making himself lord of Christendom, by not only dissolving the jurisdiction which kings and emperors had hitherto exercised over the various orders of the clergy, but also by subjecting to the papal authority all temporal princes, and rendering their dominions tributary to the see of Rome, seems no less romantic; yet this he undertook, and not altogether without success. Solomon, king of Hungary, dethroned by his cousin Geysa,

14 *Annal de l'Emp.* tome i.—Dithmar. *Vit. Greg. VII.*
15 Dithmar. *Vit. Greg. VII.*

had fled to Henry for protection, and renewed the homage of Hungary to the empire. Gregory, who favoured Geysa, exclaimed against this act of submission; and said, in a letter to Solomon, "You ought to know, that the king-"dom of Hungary belongs to the Roman church; and "learn, that you will incur the indignation of the holy "see, if you do not acknowledge that you hold your do-"minions of the pope, and not of the emperor[16]!"

This presumptuous declaration, and the neglect with which it was treated, brought the quarrel between the empire and the church to a crisis. It was directed to Solomon, but intended for Henry. And if Gregory could not succeed in one way, he was resolved that he should in another: he therefore resumed the claim of investitures, for which he had a more plausible pretence; and as that dispute and its consequences merit particular attention, I shall be more circumstantial than usual.

The predecessors of Henry IV. as well as other princes of Christendom, had enjoyed the right of nominating bishops and abbots, and of giving them investiture by the ring and crosier. The popes had been accustomed, on their part, to send legates to the emperors, to entreat their assistance, to obtain their confirmation, or desire them to come and receive the papal sanction, but for no other purpose. Gregory, however, sent two legates to summon Henry to appear before him as a delinquent, because he still continued to bestow investitures, notwithstanding the apostolic decree to the contrary; adding, that if he should fail to yield obedience to the church, he must expect to be excommunicated and dethroned.

Incensed at this arrogant message from one whom he considered as his vassal, Henry abruptly dismissed the legates, and convoked an assembly of princes and dignified ecclesiastics at Worms; where, after

A.D. 1076.

16 Goldast *Apologia pro Hen. IV.*—Thomas. *Content. inter Imp. et Sacerdot.*

mature deliberation, they concluded, that Gregory having usurped the chair of St. Peter by indirect means, infected the church of God with many novelties and abuses, and deviated from his duty to his sovereign in several scandalous attempts, the emperor, by the supreme authority derived from his predecessors, ought to divest him of his dignity, and appoint another in his place[17].

In consequence of this determination, Henry sent an ambassador to Rome, with a formal deprivation of Gregory; who, in his turn, convoked a council, at which were present a hundred and ten bishops, who unanimously agreed, that the pope had just cause to depose Henry, to dissolve the oath of allegiance which the princes and states had taken in his favour, and to prohibit them from holding any correspondence with him on pain of excommunication. And that sentence was immediately fulminated against the emperor and his adherents. "In the name of Almighty "God, and by your authority," said Gregory, addressing the members of the council, "I prohibit Henry, the son "of our emperor Henry, from governing the Teutonic "kingdom, and Italy; I release all Christians from their "oath of allegiance to him; and I strictly forbid all per-"sons to serve or attend him as king[18]."

This is the first instance of a pope's pretending to deprive a sovereign of his crown; but it was too flattering to ecclesiastical pride to be the last. No prelate, from the foundation of the church, had ever presumed to use so imperious a language as Gregory; for, although Louis the Debonnaire had been deposed by his bishops, there was at least some colour for that step. They condemned Louis, in appearance, only to do public penance.

The circular letters written by this pontiff breathe the same spirit with his sentence of deposition. In these he repeatedly asserts, that "bishops are superior to kings, and

17 Schilter. *de Libertat. Eccles. German.* lib. iv.
18 Dithmar. *Hist. Bell. inter. Imp. et Sacerdot.*

"made to judge them!"—expressions alike artful and presumptuous, and calculated for bringing in all the churchmen of the world to his standard. Gregory's purpose is said to have been, to engage in the bonds of fidelity and allegiance to the Vicar of Christ, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, all the potentates of the earth, and to establish at Rome an annual assembly of bishops, by whom the contests that might arise between kingdoms and sovereign states were to be decided, the rights and pretensions of princes to be examined, and the fate of nations and empires to be determined[19].

The haughty pontiff knew well what consequences would follow the thunder of the church. The German bishops come immediately over to his party, and drew with them many of the nobles: the brand of civil war still lay smouldering, and a bull properly directed was sufficient to set it in a blaze. The Saxons, Henry's old enemies, made use of the papal displeasure as a pretence for rebelling against him. Even his favourite Guelf, a nobleman to whom he had given the duchy of Bavaria, supported the malcontents with that power which he owed to his sovereign's bounty; and the very princes and prelates who had assisted in deposing Gregory, gave up their monarch to be tried by the pope, who was requested to come to Augsburg for that purpose[20].

Willing to prevent this odious trial at Augsburg, Henry took the unaccountable resolution of suddenly passing the Tirolese Alps, accompanied only by a few domestics, in order to ask absolution of Gregory, his tyrannical oppressor, who was then in Canosa, on the Apennines; a fortress belonging to the countess or duchess Matilda, whom I have already had occasion to mention. At the gates of this place the emperor presented himself as an humble penitent. He

19 Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii. par. ii. cent. xi. et Auct. cit. in loc.
20 Dithmar. ubi sup.—*Annal. German.* ap. Struv.

alone was admitted within the outer court, where, being stripped of his robes, and wrapped in sackcloth, he was obliged to remain three days, in the month of January, barefooted and fasting, before he was permitted to kiss the feet of his holiness, who was then shut up with the devout Matilda, whose spiritual director he had long been, if not her gallant. So strong was the attachment of this lady to Gregory, or her hatred against the Germans, that she assigned all her territories to the apostolic see; and this donation is perhaps the true cause of almost all the wars which subsequently raged between the emperors and the popes. She possessed, in her own right, great part of Tuscany; Mantua, Parma, Reggio, Placentia, Ferrara, Modena, Verona, and almost the whole of what is now called the patrimony of St. Peter, from Viterbo to Orvieto; with part of Umbria, Spoleto, and the Marche of Ancona[21]. A.D. 1077.

The emperor was at length permitted to throw himself at the feet of the haughty pontiff, who condescended to grant him absolution, after he had sworn obedience to his holiness in all things, and promised to submit to his solemn decision at Augsburg—so that Henry reaped no other fruit than disgrace by his journey, while Gregory, elate with his triumph, and now considering himself as the lord and master of all the crowned heads in Christendom, said in several of his letters, that it was his duty "to pull down "the pride of kings."

This extraordinary accommodation disgusted the princes of Italy. They never could forgive the insolence of the pope or the abject humility of the emperor. Happily however for Henry, their indignation at Gregory's arrogance overbalanced their detestation of *his* meanness. He took advantage of this temper: and by a change of fortune, hitherto unknown to the German emperors, he found a

21 Fran. Mar. Florent. *Mem. della Contessa Matilda.*

strong party in Italy, when abandoned in Germany. All Lombardy took up arms against the pope, while he was raising all Germany against the emperor.

Gregory, on the one hand, made use of every art to procure the election of another emperor in Germany; and Henry, on his part, left nothing undone to persuade the Italians to make choice of another pope. The Germans chose Rodolph, duke of Suabia, who was solemnly

A.D. 1078. crowned at Mentz; and Gregory, hesitating on this occasion, behaved truly like the supreme judge of kings. He had deposed Henry; but it was still in his power to pardon that prince: he therefore affected to be displeased that Rodolph was consecrated without his order; and declared, that he would acknowledge as emperor and king of Germany that claimant who should be most submissive to the holy see[22].

Henry, however, trusting more to the valour of his troops than to the generosity of the pope, set out immediately for Germany, where he defeated his enemies in several engagements; and Gregory, seeing no hopes of

A.D. 1080. submission, thundered out a second sentence of excommunication against him, confirming at the same time the election of Rodolph, to whom he sent a golden crown, on which the following well-known verse, equally haughty and puerile, was engraven:

Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodolpho.

This donation was accompanied with a prophetic anathema against Henry, so wild and extravagant, as to make one doubt whether it was dictated by enthusiasm or priestcraft. After depriving him of *strength in combat*, and condemning him *never to be victorious*, it concludes with the following remarkable apostrophe to St. Peter and St. Paul: "Make all men sensible, that, as you can bind and "loose every thing in heaven, you can also upon earth take

22 Dithmar, *Hist. Bell. inter Imp. et Sacerdot.*—Muratori, *Annal. d'Ital.*

"from, or give to, every one according to his deserts, "empires, kingdoms, principalities: let the kings and "princes of the age instantly feel your power, that they "may not dare to despise the orders of your church; and "let your justice be so speedily executed upon Henry, "that nobody may doubt of his falling by your means, and "not by chance[23]."

To avoid the effects of the second excommunication, Henry took a step worthy of himself. He assembled at Brixen about twenty German bishops, who, acting also for the bishops of Lombardy, unanimously resolved, that the pope, instead of having power over the emperor, owed him obedience and allegiance; and that, having rendered himself unworthy of the papal chair by his misconduct and rebellion, he ought to be deposed. They accordingly degraded Hildebrand, and elected in his room Guibert, archbishop of Ravenna, a person of undoubted merit, who took the name of Clement III.

Henry promised to put the new pope in possession of Rome. But he was obliged, in the mean time, to shift the scene of action, and to employ all his forces against his rival Rodolph, who had re-assembled a large body of troops in Saxony. The two armies met near Mersburg, and both fought with great fury. Victory remained long doubtful: but the fortune of the day seemed inclining to Rodolph, when his hand was cut off by the famous Godfrey of Bouillon, then in the service of Henry, and afterwards renowned by the conquest of Jerusalem. Discouraged by the misfortune of their chief, the rebels immediately gave way; and Rodolph perceiving his end approaching, ordered the hand that was cut off to be brought to him, and made a speech to his officers on the occasion, which could not fail to have a favourable influence on the emperor's affairs. "Behold," said he, "the hand with which I took the oath of allegiance "to Henry—an oath which, at the instigation of Rome, I

23 Hardouin, *Concil.*—Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*

"have violated, in perfidiously aspiring to an honour that "was not my due[24]."

The emperor, thus delivered from his formidable antagonist, soon dispersed the rest of his enemies in Germany, and set out for Italy, in order to settle Clement III. in the papal chair. But the gates of Rome being shut against him, he was obliged to attack the city in form. After a siege of two years, it was taken by assault, and with difficulty saved from being pillaged; but Gregory retired into the castle of St. Angelo, and thence defied and excommunicated the conqueror.

A. D. 1081.

The new pope being consecrated with the usual ceremonies, expressed his gratitude by crowning Henry, with the concurrence of the Roman senate and people. The siege of St. Angelo was in the mean time prosecuted: but, the emperor being called into Lombardy, Robert Guiscard took advantage of his absence to release Gregory; who died soon after at Salerno. His last words, borrowed from the Scripture, were worthy of the greatest saint: "I have loved justice, and hated "iniquity; therefore I die in exile[25]."

A. D. 1084.

A. D. 1085.

Henry did not long enjoy the success of his Italian expedition, or that tranquillity which might have been expected from the death of Gregory. Germany was involved in new troubles: thither he rapidly marched. The Saxons had elected a king of the Romans, whom he defeated in several conflicts, and whose blood atoned for his presumption. Another pretender shared the same fate. Every thing yielded to the emperor's valour.

But while Henry was thus victorious in Germany, his enemies were busy in embroiling his affairs in Italy. Not satisfied with the emperor's pope, they had elected the abbot of Monte Cassino, under the name of Victor III. and, he dying in a short time, they chose in his room Urban II.,

24 *Chron. Magdeb.*

25 Dithmar. *Vit. Greg. VII.*—Murat. ubi sup.

who, in conjunction with the countess Matilda, seduced the emperor's son, Conrad, into a rebellion against his father.

Conrad, assuming the title of king of Italy, was crowned by Anselmo, archbishop of Milan; and, soon after this ceremony, he married the daughter of Roger, count of Sicily. He succeeded so well in his usurpation, that the greater part of the Italian cities and nobles acknowledged him as their sovereign. Despairing of being able to reduce him to obedience by arms, Henry at length assembled the German princes, who put the delinquent to the ban of the empire, and declared his brother Henry king of the Romans[26]. An accommodation was now made with the Saxons and other adversaries of the emperor; and he hoped to spend the latter part of his life in peace.

A. D. 1090.

A. D. 1099.

Pascal II., another Hildebrand, succeeded Urban in the see of Rome. This pontiff no sooner found himself safely seated in the papal chair, than he called a council, to which he summoned the emperor; and, as Henry did not obey the citation, he excommunicated him anew for the schisms which he had introduced into the church. But that vengeance, though sufficiently severe, was gentle, in comparison of what Pascal meditated and accomplished. After the death of Conrad, he excited young Henry to rebel against his father, under pretence of defending the cause of orthodoxy; alleging, that he was bound to take upon himself the reins of government, as he could not acknowledge an excommunicated king or father[27].

A. D. 1101.

In vain did the emperor use every paternal remonstrance to dissuade his son from proceeding to extremities: the breach became wider; and both prepared for the decision of the sword. But the son, dreading his father's military superiority, and confiding in his tenderness, made use of a stratagem as base as it was effectual. He threw himself un-

26 *Chron. Magdeb.* 27 Dithmar. *Hist. Bell. inter Imp. et Sacerdot*

expectedly at the emperor's feet, and implored pardon for his undutiful behaviour, which he imputed to the advice of evil counsellors. In consequence of this submission, he was taken into favour by his deceived parent, who immediately dismissed his army. The ungrateful youth now bared his perfidious heart: he ordered his father to be confined; and assembled a diet of his own confederates, at which the pope's legate presided, and repeated the sentence of excommunication against the obnoxious emperor, whose dignity was instantly transferred to his rebellious son[28].

A.D. 1105.

The archbishops of Mentz and Cologne were sent as deputies to the old emperor, to intimate his deposition, and demand the *regalia*. Henry received this deputation with equal surprise and concern; and finding that the chief accusation against him was, "the scandalous manner in which "he had set bishoprics to sale," he thus addressed the audacious ecclesiastics: "If I have prostituted the benefices "of the church for hire, you yourselves are the most pro- "per persons to convict me of that simony. Say, then, I "conjure you, in the name of the eternal God! what have "I exacted, or what have I received, for having promoted "you to the dignities which you now enjoy?" They acknowledged that he was innocent, as far as regarded their preferment:—"and yet," continued he, "the archbishoprics "of Mentz and Cologne, being two of the best in my gift, "I might have filled my coffers by exposing them to sale. "I bestowed them, however, on you, out of free grace and "favour; and a worthy return you make to my benevo- "lence!—Do not, I beseech you, become abettors of those "who have lifted up their hands against their lord and "master, in defiance of faith, gratitude, and allegiance."

As the two archbishops, unmoved by that pathetic address, insisted on his compliance with the purport of their

28 Dithmar. *Hist. Bell. inter Imp. et Sacerdot.*

errand, he retired, and put on his royal ornaments; then returning to the apartment he had left, and seating himself on a chair of state, he renewed his remonstrance in these words: "Here are the marks of that royalty with "which I was invested by God and the princes of the empire: if you disregard the wrath of Heaven, and the "eternal reproach of mankind, so much as to lay violent "hands on your sovereign, you may strip me of them. "I am not in a condition to defend myself."

Regardless of these expostulations, the unfeeling prelates snatched the crown from his head, and, dragging him from his chair, pulled off his robes by force. While they were thus employed, Henry exclaimed, "Great God!"—the tears flowed down his venerable cheeks—"thou art "the God of vengeance, and wilt repay this outrage. I "have sinned, I own, and merited such shame by the "follies of my youth; but thou wilt not fail to punish those "traitors, for their insolence, ingratitude, and perjury[29]."

To such a degree of wretchedness was this prince reduced by the barbarity of his son, that, destitute of the common necessaries of life, he entreated the bishop of Spire, whom he had promoted to that see, to grant him a canonry for his subsistence; representing that he was capable of performing the office of "chanter or reader!" Disappointed in that humble request, he shed a flood of tears, and, turning to those who were present, said, with a deep sigh, "My dear friends, at least have pity on my condition, "for I am touched by the hand of the Lord!" The hand of man, at least, was heavy upon him; for he was not only in want, but under confinement.

In the midst of these distresses, when every one thought his courage was utterly extinguished, and his soul overwhelmed by despondence, Henry found means to escape from custody, and reached Cologne, where he was recognised as lawful emperor. He then repaired to the Low

29 Dithmar. ubi sup.—Heiss, lib. ii. cap. ix.

Countries, where he found friends, who raised a considerable body of men to facilitate his restoration; and he sent circular letters to the princes of Christendom, in order to interest them in his cause. He even wrote to the pope, giving him to understand, that he was inclined to an accommodation, provided it could be settled without prejudice to his crown. But before any thing material could be executed in his favour, he died at Liege, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and the forty-ninth of his reign. He was a prince of great courage, and excellent endowments both of body and mind. There was an air of dignity in his appearance that spoke the greatness of his soul. He possessed a natural fund of eloquence and vivacity; was of a mild and merciful temper; extremely charitable; and an admirable pattern of fortitude and resignation[30].

Aug. 7, 1106.

Henry V. put the finishing stroke to his barbarous, unnatural, and hypocritical conduct, by causing his father's body, as the carcase of an excommunicated wretch, to be dug out of the grave where it was buried, in the cathedral of Liege, and be carried to a cave at Spire[31]. But, notwithstanding his obligations and seeming attachment to the church, this parricidal zealot no sooner found himself established upon the imperial throne, than he maintained that right of investiture in opposition to which he had taken arms against his father, and the exercise of which was thought to merit anathemas so frightful as to disturb the sacred mansions of the dead.

In order to terminate that old dispute, Henry invited the pope into Germany. But Pascal, who was well acquainted with the new emperor's haughty and implacable disposition, thought proper to take a different route, and put himself under the protection of Philip I. king of France, who undertook to mediate an accommodation between the empire and the holy see. A conference accordingly took place at Chalons, but without effect.

30 Leonis Ostiens. *Hist.*—*Chron. Magdeb.*

31 *Annal de l'Emp.* tome i.

After this unsuccessful meeting, the pope held a council at Troyes, and Henry convoked a diet at Mentz: the former supported Pascal's pretensions, and the latter declared for the emperor's right of investiture. But more weighty affairs demanding Henry's attention, the dispute subsided for a time. He was engaged for several years in wars with Hungary and Poland, which ended without any very remarkable incidents, and left things nearly as at the beginning. A.D. 1107.

When he was weary of fighting, Henry thought of disputing: he was desirous of settling his contest with the pope; and therefore entered Italy with such an army as he thought would intimidate the pontiff. Pascal received him with an appearance of cordiality, but would not renounce the claim of investiture; and Henry, finding himself deceived in his expectations, ordered the pope to be seised. The citizens now took up arms, and a battle was fought within the walls of Rome. The Romans were defeated; and the carnage was so great, that the waters of the Tiber were stained with blood. Pascal was taken prisoner, and became less inflexible. He crowned Henry, and confirmed him in the right of investiture; dividing the host with him, at the same time, in token of perfect reconciliation, and pronouncing the following anathema: "As this part of the vivifying body is separated from the other, let the violator of this treaty be separated from the kingdom of Christ[32]." A.D. 1111.

But Henry had no sooner left Italy than it appeared that the court of Rome was by no means sincere in the concessions it had made; for, although Pascal himself still preserved the exteriors of friendship and good faith, a council of the Lateran, called by him, annulled the bull for the royal investiture of benefices, and ordered the emperor to be excommunicated. A.D. 1112.

32 *Chron. Abb. Petriburgens.*—Padre Paolo, *Benef. Eccles.*

A rebellion broke out in Saxony, which Henry was enabled to quell by the valour of his nephew, Frederic duke of Suabia and Alsace, whom he had promoted to the supreme command of his army. On the death of the countess Matilda, the emperor, as her nearest relative, claimed the succession, notwithstanding the steps she had taken in favour of the holy see, alleging that it was not in her power to alienate her estates, which depended immediately upon the empire. He therefore set out for Lombardy, and sent ambassadors to Rome, beseeching the pope to revoke that sentence of excommunication which, in defiance of their last agreement, had been fulminated against him.

A. D. 1114.

A. D. 1115.

Pascal would not even favour the ambassadors with an audience, but convoked a council, in which his treaty with the emperor was a second time condemned. Incensed at such arrogance, Henry advanced towards Rome, determined to make his authority respected; and the pope, alarmed at his approach, took shelter among the Norman princes in Apulia, the new vassals and protectors of the church.

A.D. 1116.

The emperor entered Rome in triumph, and was crowned by Burdin bishop of Braga, who attended him in this expedition. But Henry's presence being necessary in Tuscany, Pascal privately returned to Rome, where he died after a pontificate unusually long. Cardinal Cajetan was elected his successor, without the assent of the emperor, under the name of Gelasius II.

A.D. 1117.

A. D. 1118.

Enraged at this presumption, Henry declared the election void, and ordered the substitution of Burdin, who assumed the name of Gregory VIII., revoked the sentence of excommunication against his patron, and confirmed his right of investiture. Gelasius, though supported by the Norman princes, was obliged to take refuge in France, where he died; and the archbishop of Vi-

A.D. 1119.

enne was elected in his room, by the cardinals then present, under the name of Calixtus II.

Calixtus attempted an accommodation with Henry, which not succeeding, he called a council, and excommunicated both the emperor and the antipope. He then set out for Rome, where he was honourably received, and Gregory VIII. retired to Sutri, a strong town garrisoned by the emperor's troops. They were not, however, able to protect him from the fury of his rival. Calixtus, assisted by the Norman princes, besieged Sutri; and the inhabitants, dreading the consequences, delivered up Gregory, who was placed by his competitor upon a camel, with his face towards the tail, and conducted through the streets of Rome, amid the scoffs and insults of the populace, as a prelude to his confinement for life[33]. A. D. 1120.

The states of the empire wishing for a termination of this long contest between the popes and the emperors, unanimously supplicated Henry for peace. He referred himself entirely to their decision: and a diet being assembled at Worms, it was decreed, that an embassy should immediately be sent to the pope, desiring that he would convoke a general council at Rome, by which all disputes might be determined. Calixtus accordingly called the famous council, which was opened during Lent, and at which were present three hundred bishops and about seven hundred abbots. A. D. 1123.

The imperial ambassadors being heard before this grand assembly, the affair of investiture was at length settled, with their consent, on the following conditions:—"That, "for the future, the bishops and abbots should be chosen by "the monks and canons; but that this election should be "made in presence of the emperor, or of an ambassador "appointed by him for that purpose: that, in case of a "dispute among the electors, the decision of it should be

33 Dithmar. *Hist. Bell. inter Imp. et Sacerdot.*

"left to the emperor, who was to consult with the bishops "on that subject; that the bishop or abbot elect should "take an oath of allegiance to the emperor, receive from "his hand the *regalia*, and do homage for them; that the "emperor should no longer confer the *regalia* by the cere- "mony of the ring and crosier, which were the ensigns of "a spiritual dignity, but by that of the sceptre, as more "proper to invest the person elected in the possession of "rights and privileges merely temporal[34]."

Thus, in substituting the *sceptre* for the *ring* and *crosier*, ended one of the most bloody quarrels that ever desolated Christendom. But as no mention had been made, in this accommodation, of the emperor's right to create popes, or to intermeddle in their election, Calixtus was no sooner dead, than the cardinals, clergy, and people of Rome, without the participation of Henry, proceeded to a new election, which was carried on with so much disorder, that two persons were chosen at the same time; Theobald, called Celestine, and Lambert, bishop of Ostia, who assumed the name of Honorius II. The latter was confirmed in the papacy, on the voluntary resignation of his competitor.

A.D. 1124.

Henry died at Utrecht at the age of forty-four years. He was a wise, politic, and resolute prince; and, exclusive of his unnatural behaviour to his father, was worthy of the imperial throne. As he had no children by his wife Matilda, who was the daughter of Henry I. of England, a contest arose for the succession. But a variety of objects demand your attention, before I proceed with the history of Germany.

May, 1125.

34 Padre Paolo, ubi sup.—Schilt. *de Libertat. German.* lib. iv.

LETTER XXIV.

Of the Reigns of the first three Norman Kings of England.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, seen the Norman duke victorious at Hastings. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the English nation at the issue of that unfortunate battle—the death of their king, A. D. 1066. and the slaughter of their principal nobility. And William, in order to terminate an enterprise which required celerity and vigour to render it completely successful, instantly put his army in motion, and advanced by forced marches to London. His approach increased the general alarm, and the divisions already prevalent in the English councils. The superior clergy, many of whom even then were French or Normans, began to declare in his favour; and the pope's bull, by which his undertaking was avowed and consecrated, was now offered as a reason for general submission.

Other causes rendered it difficult for the English, destitute as they were of a leader, to defend their liberties in this critical emergency. The body of the people had, in a great measure, lost their ancient pride and independent spirit, during their subjection to the Danes; and as Canute had, in the course of his administration, much abated the rigours of conquest, and governed them equitably by their own laws, they regarded with less terror a foreign sovereign; and deemed the inconveniences of admitting the pretensions of William less dreadful than those of bloodshed, war, and resistance. A repulse, which a party of Londoners received from five hundred Norman horse, renewed the terror of the great defeat at Hastings: the easy submission of all the inhabitants of Kent was an additional discouragement; and the burning of Southwark

made the citizens of London dread a like fate for their capital. Few men longer entertained any thoughts but of immediate safety and self-preservation.

Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, met the conqueror at Berkhamsted, and made submissions to him: and before he reached London, all the chief nobility, with the weak Edgar Atheling, their lawful but deservedly neglected prince, came into William's camp, and declared their intention of yielding to his authority. They requested him to accept the crown, which they now considered as vacant; and orders were immediately issued to prepare every thing for the ceremony of his coronation. It was accordingly performed in Westminster-abbey, in presence of the most considerable nobility and gentry, both English and Norman, with seeming satisfaction[1]. This appearance of satisfaction on the part of the former, if it contained any sincerity, must have been the effect of the conciliating manner in which the ceremony was conducted. The duke took the usual oath administered to the Anglo-Saxon kings at their inauguration; namely, "to preserve inviolate the "constitution, and govern according to the laws," before the crown was placed upon his head, and after the consent of all present had been asked and obtained[2].

William, thus possessed of the throne by a pretended will of king Edward and an irregular election of the people abetted by force of arms, retired to Barking in Essex; where he received the submissions of all the

A.D. 1067.

1 Gul. Pictav.—Orderic. Vital.

2 Aware that such an oath would be demanded, and conscious that he must either violate it or relinquish the rights of conquest, William is said to have hesitated, whether he should accept the offer of the English crown from the nobility and clergy, or owe it solely to the sword. But his most experienced officers advised him to moderate his ambition; sensible that the people of England, when they saw they had to contend for their free constitution, and not merely for the person who should administer their government, would fight with double fury, when they found that their dearest interests, their liberty, and property, were at stake. *Gul. Pictav.*

nobles who had not attended his coronation, and whom he generally confirmed in the possession of their lands and dignities, confiscating only the estates of Harold and those of his most active partisans. Every thing wore the appearance of peace and tranquillity. The new sovereign seemed solicitous to unite the English and Normans by intermarriages and alliances; and all his subjects who approached his person were received with affability and respect. He confirmed the liberties and immunities of London, and all the other cities of England; and seemed desirous of resting every thing on ancient foundations. In his whole administration he bore the semblance of the lawful prince, not of the conqueror; so that the English began to flatter themselves they had only changed the succession of their sovereigns—a point which gave them little concern—without injury to the form of their government.

But, notwithstanding this seeming confidence and friendship which he expressed for his English subjects, he took care to place all real power in the hands of the Normans, and still to keep possession of that sword to which he was chiefly indebted for his crown. He every-where disarmed the inhabitants: he built fortresses in the principal towns, where he quartered Norman soldiers; he bestowed the forfeited estates on the most powerful of his captains, and established funds for the payment of his troops. While his civil administration seemed to be that of the legal magistrate, his military institutions were those of a master and a tyrant. By this mixture of rigour and lenity he so subdued and composed the minds of the people of England, that he ventured to visit his native country within six months after he had left it.

Various reasons have been assigned by historians for this extraordinary journey; for extraordinary it certainly was in William, as Normandy remained in tranquillity, to absent himself so soon after the exterior submission of a great nation. Some have ascribed it to an ostentatious desire of displaying his pomp and magnificence among his

ancient courtiers; while others, supposing him incapable of such weakness, affirm, that in this step, apparently so extravagant, he was guided by a concealed policy; that finding he could neither satisfy his rapacious officers, nor secure his unstable government, without seising the possessions of the English nobility and gentry, he left them to the mercy of an insolent and licentious army, in order to try their spirit, to provoke them to rebellion, and to give a colour to his intended usurpations. I am inclined to think that William was influenced by both these motives in undertaking his journey to Normandy. But, whatever was the cause, the effect is certain: many of the English gentry revolted in consequence of the king's absence; and he thenceforth either embraced, or was more fully confirmed in, the resolution of reducing them to the most abject condition.

But although the natural violence and austerity of William's temper prevented him from feeling any scruples in the execution of this tyrannical purpose, he had art enough to conceal his intention, and still to preserve some appearance of justice in his oppressions. He was prevailed on to pardon the rebels who submitted to his mercy; and he ordered that all his English subjects who had been arbitrarily expelled from their possessions by the Normans during his absence, should be re-instated. The public discontents, however, daily increased; and the injuries committed and suffered on both sides highly embittered the quarrel between the victors and vanquished. The insolence of imperious masters, dispersed through the kingdom, seemed intolerable to the natives, who took every opportunity of gratifying their vengeance by the private slaughter of their enemies. Meanwhile an insurrection in the northern counties drew general attention, and seemed pregnant with the most important events.

A. D. 1068. Edwin and Morcar, the potent earls of Mercia and Northumberland, were the conductors of this attempt to shake off the Norman yoke. Before they took

arms, they had stipulated for aid from Blethin, prince of North Wales, Malcolm, king of Scotland, and Sweyn, king of Denmark. Aware of the importance of celerity in crushing a rebellion supported by such powerful leaders, and in a cause so agreeable to the wishes of the body of the people, William, who had always his troops in readiness, marched northward with speed; and reached York before the hostile chieftains were prepared for action, or had received any succours, except a small reinforcement from Wales. Edwin and Morcar, therefore found it necessary to have recourse to the clemency of the king: and their adherents, thus deserted, were unable to make any resistance. But the treatment of the chieftains and their followers, after submission, was very different. William observed religiously the terms granted to the former, and allowed them for the present to keep possession of their estates; but he punished the latter with the rigours of confiscation[3].

The English were now convinced that their final subjection was intended. The early confiscation of the estates of Harold's followers seemed iniquitous, as the proprietors had never sworn fealty to the duke of Normandy, and fought only in defence of that government which they themselves had established. Yet that rigour, however repugnant to the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon laws, was excused on account of the urgent necessities of the victor; and such as were not involved in those forfeitures hoped to enjoy unmolested their possessions and their dignities. But the subsequent confiscation of so many estates in favour of the Normans, convinced the people that William intended to rely solely, for the maintenance of his authority, on the support and affection of foreigners. And they foresaw that new forfeitures and attainders would necessarily ensue from this destructive plan of policy.

3 Orderic. Vital.—Sim. Dunelm.

Impressed with a sense of their melancholy situation, many of the English fled into foreign countries, with an intention of passing their lives abroad, free from oppression or of returning at an early opportunity to assist their friends in recovering their native liberties. Edgar Atheling himself, though caressed by William, retired into Scotland with his sisters Margaret and Christina. They were well received by Malcolm III., who soon after espoused Margaret; and partly with a view of strengthening his kingdom by the accession of so many strangers, partly in the hope of employing them against the growing power of William, he gave great countenance to all the English exiles [4]. Many of them settled in Scotland, and there laid the foundations of families which afterward made a figure in that kingdom.

While the people of England laboured under those oppressions, new attempts were made for the recovery of their liberties. Godwin, Edmund, and Magnus, sons of Harold, had sought a retreat in Ireland, after the defeat at Hastings; and having met with a kind reception from the princes of that island, they projected an invasion of England, and hoped that all the exiles from Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, assisted by forces from these several countries, would at once commence hostilities, and rouse the resentment of the English nation against their haughty conquerors. A.D. 1069. They landed in Devonshire, but found a body of Normans ready to oppose them; and, being defeated in several encounters, they were obliged to seek shelter in their ships.

The struggle, however, was not yet over: all the north of England was soon in arms. The Northumbrians, impatient of servitude, had attacked Robert de Comyn, governor of Durham, and put him and seven hundred of his followers to death. This example animated the inhabitants of York, who slew Robert Fitz-Richard their governor,

4 Matth. Par. *Hist. Maj.*—Hoved. *Annal.*

and besieged in the castle William Malet, on whom the chief command had devolved. About the same time a Danish army landed, under the command of Osberne, brother to king Sweyn; and Edgar Atheling also re-appeared with some English noblemen who had shared his exile, and who easily excited the warlike and discontented Northumbrians to a general insurrection.

To provide more effectually for the defence of the citadel of York, Malet set fire to some neighbouring houses. The flames quickly spreading, reduced the greater part of the city to ashes; and the enraged inhabitants, aided by the Danes, took advantage of the confusion to attack the fortress, which they carried by assault, and put the garrison, amounting to three thousand men, to the sword. This success served as a signal of revolt to many other parts of the kingdom. The English, repenting of their former too easy submission, seemed determined to make one great effort for the recovery of their liberty and the expulsion of their oppressors [5].

Undismayed amidst these alarms, William marched against the insurgents in the north, whom he considered as most formidable. Not choosing, however, to trust entirely to force, he endeavoured to weaken the rebels by detaching the Danes from them. He prevailed upon Osberne, by large presents, and the liberty of plundering the coast, to desert his engagements. Many English noblemen, in despair, followed the unworthy example, and made submissions to the Conqueror. Malcolm, coming too late to support his confederates, was obliged to retire; and the Normans again triumphed. Prince Edgar escaped to the court of that monarch; but he afterwards submitted to his enemy, and was permitted to live unmolested in England [6]. A.D. 1070.

William's seeming clemency proceeded only from po-

5 Ord. Vital.—Gul. Gemet.—Sim. Dunelm.

6 Gul. Gemet.—Hoved.

litical considerations, or from his esteem of individuals: his heart was hardened against all compassion toward the English as a people; and he scrupled no measure, however violent, which seemed requisite to support his plan of tyrannical administration. To punish the Northumbrians, and incapacitate them from ever more molesting him, he issued orders for laying waste the whole country between the Humber and the Tyne [7]. The houses were reduced to ashes by the unfeeling Normans; the cattle were seised and driven away; the instruments of husbandry were destroyed; and the inhabitants were compelled either to seek a subsistence in the southern parts of Scotland, or to perish miserably in the woods from cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thousand persons are computed to have been sacrificed to this stroke of barbarous policy [8]; which, by seeking a remedy for a temporary evil, inflicted a lasting wound on the power and population of the country.

The insurrections and conspiracies, in different parts of the kingdom, had involved the bulk of the landholders in the guilt of treason; and the king rigorously executed against them the laws of forfeiture and attainder. Their lives were commonly spared; but their estates were either annexed to the royal domain, or conferred with the most profuse bounty on the Normans and other foreigners. Against a people thus devoted to destruction, any suspicion served as the most undoubted proof of guilt. It was a sufficient crime in an Englishman to be opulent, noble, or powerful: and the policy of the king, concurring with the rapacity of needy adventurers, produced an almost total revolution in the landed property of the kingdom. Ancient and honourable families were reduced to beggary. The nobles were treated with ignominy and contempt; they had the mortification to see their castles and manors possessed by Normans of the meanest condition, and to

7 *Chron. Sax.*—Sim. Dunelm.—Flor. Vigorn.

8 Order. Vital.

find themselves excluded from every road that led either to riches or preferment [9].

Power naturally follows property. This change of land-holders alone, therefore, gave great security to the Norman government. But William also took care, by the new institutions that he established, to retain for ever the military authority in those hands which had enabled him to acquire the kingdom. He introduced into England the feudal polity, which he found established in France and Normandy; and which, during that age, was the foundation both of the stability and of the disorders in most of the monarchical governments of Europe. He divided all the lands of England, with few exceptions, into baronies; and he conferred these, with the reservation of stated services and payments, on the most considerable of his followers. The barons, who held immediately of the crown, assigned parts of their lands to other foreigners, who were denominated knights or vassals, and who paid their lord the same duty and submission, in peace and war, which he owed to his sovereign. As scarcely any of the native English were admitted into the first rank, the few who retained any landed property were glad to be received into the second, and, under the protection of some powerful Norman, to load themselves and their posterity with a grievous servitude for estates which had been transmitted free to them from their ancestors [10].

William's next regulations regarded the church. He deposed Stigand, the primate, and several other English bishops, by the assistance of Ermenfroy, the pope's legate; and as it was a fixed maxim in his reign, as well as in some

9. M. Westm.—Order Vital.

10 M. Westm.—M. Par.—Bracton, lib. i. cap. 11.—Fleta, lib. i. cap. 8. The proprietors of land, under the Anglo-Saxon princes, were only subjected to three obligations; namely, to attend the king with their followers in military expeditions, to assist in building or defending the royal castles, and to keep the highways and bridges in a proper state of repair. These were emphatically called the *three necessities*, as they certainly were in a government without regular troops, and almost without revenue. Spelm. *Reliq.*—Hickesii *Dissert.*

of the subsequent, that no native of the island should be advanced to any dignity, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, the king promoted Lanfranc, a Milanese monk, to the see of Canterbury. That prelate professed the most devoted attachment to Rome, which thenceforth daily increased in England, and became very dangerous to some of William's successors; but the arbitrary power of the Conqueror over the English, and his extensive authority over the Normans, prevented him from feeling its inconvenience. He retained the clergy in great subjection, as well as his lay subjects, and would allow no person of any condition or character to dispute his absolute will and pleasure. None of his ministers or barons, whatever might be their offences, could be subjected to spiritual censures, until his consent was obtained. He prohibited his people from acknowledging any one as pope, whom he himself had not recognised; and he ordered that all ecclesiastical canons, voted in any synod, should be submitted to him, and ratified by his authority, before they could be valid. The same sanction was required for bulls or letters from Rome, before they were produced. And when the imperious Gregory VII., whom we have seen tyrannising over kings and emperors, wrote to this monarch, requiring him to fulfil his promise of doing homage for the kingdom of England to the see of Rome, and to send him that tribute which his predecessors had been accustomed to pay to the vicar of Christ (meaning *St. Peter's Pence*, a charitable donation of the Saxon princes, which the court of Rome, as usual, was inclined to construe into a badge of subjection acknowledged by the kingdom), William coolly replied, that the money should be remitted as formerly, but that he neither promised to do homage to Rome, nor entertained any thoughts of imposing that servitude on his kingdom[11].

11 *Ang. Sacra.*—Ingulph.—Order. Vital.

The following anecdote shows, in a still stronger light, the contempt of this prince for ecclesiastical dominion. Odo, bishop of Bayeux, the king's maternal brother, whom he had created earl of Kent, and entrusted with a great share of power, had amassed immense riches; and, agreeably to the usual progress of human wishes, he began to regard his present eminence as only a step to future grandeur. He even aspired to the papacy, and had resolved to transmit all his wealth to Italy, and go thither with several noblemen, whom he had persuaded to follow his example, in hopes of establishments under the future pope. William was no sooner informed of this scheme, than he accused Odo of treason, and ordered him to be arrested; but nobody would lay hands on the bishop. The king was therefore obliged to seise him; and when Odo insisted, that, as a prelate, he was exempt from all temporal jurisdiction, William boldly replied, "I "arrest not the bishop, but the earl!" and accordingly sent him prisoner into Normandy, where he was long detained in custody, notwithstanding the remonstrances and menaces of the pope[12].

The English had the cruel mortification to find, that their king's authority, however worthy of a sovereign in some instances, generally tended to their oppression, or to perpetuate their subjection. He had even entertained the difficult project of totally abolishing their language. He ordered the English youth to be instructed in the French tongue, in all the schools throughout the kingdom. The pleadings in the supreme courts of judicature were in French: the deeds were often drawn in the same language; the laws were composed in that idiom. No other tongue was used at court: it became the language of all fashionable societies: and many of the natives themselves affected to excel in it[13]. To this attempt of the Conqueror, and to the

12 *Ang. Sacra.*—Order. Vital.

13 *Chron. Rothom.*—Ingulph. *Hist.*—Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*.

foreign dominions so long annexed to the crown of England, we owe the great mixture of French at present to be found in our language.

While William was thus wantonly exercising his tyranny over England, his foreign affairs fell into disorder; and the oppressed English assisted him in their retrieval. Fulk, count of Anjou, had seised the province of Maine, which had fallen under the dominion of the duke of Normandy, by the will of Herbert, the last count. But William, by the assistance of his new subjects, soon obliged the inhabitants, who had revolted, to return to their duty, and the count of Anjou to renounce his pretensions[14].

A.D. 1073.

The king now passed some years in Normandy, where his presence was become necessary on account of the turbulent disposition of his eldest son Robert, who openly aspired at independency, and demanded immediate possession of Normandy and Maine. William gave him a positive refusal, repeating that homely saying, that he never intended to throw off his clothes till he went to bed. He accordingly called over an army of Englishmen, under his ancient captains, who bravely expelled Robert and his adherents. The prince took shelter in the castle of Gerberoy in the Beauvoisis, which the king of France, who secretly favoured his pretensions, had provided for him. In this fortress he was closely besieged by his father, against whom he made a gallant defence; and many rencounters passed, which resembled more the single combats of chivalry than the military operations of armies. One was too remarkable, by its circumstances and its event, to be omitted. Robert, encountering the king, who was concealed by his helmet, wounded and dismounted him, when, calling for assistance, his voice discovered him to his son, who, struck with a sense of remorse, duty, and the dread of greater guilt, instantly

A.D. 1076.

A.D. 1079.

14 *Chron. Sax.*—Order. Vital.

threw himself at William's feet, craved pardon for his offences, and offered to purchase forgiveness by any atonement. A return of kindness, however, did not immediately ensue. William's military pride was wounded, and his resentment was too obstinate at once to yield; but a reconciliation was effected by the interposition of the queen and the nobles[15].

The peaceable state of William's affairs now gave him leisure to finish an undertaking, which proves his great and extensive genius, and does honour to his memory. It was a general survey of all the lands of England; their extent in each district, their proprietors, tenures, value; the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and, in some counties, the number of tenants, cottagers, and slaves of all denominations, who lived upon them. This valuable piece of antiquity, called the Domesday book, is still preserved in the Exchequer, and contributes to the illustration of the ancient state of England.

A. D. 1081.

William, like all the Normans, was much attached to the manly amusement of hunting: and his passion for this sport he cruelly indulged at the expense of his unhappy subjects. Not content with those large forests which the Saxon kings possessed in all parts of England, he resolved to make a new forest near Winchester, the usual place of his residence. For that purpose he laid waste the country for an extent of thirty miles in Hampshire, expelling the inhabitants from their houses, seising their property, and demolishing churches and convents, without making the sufferers any compensation for the injury[16].

The death of this prince was occasioned by a quarrel not altogether worthy of his life. A witticism gave rise to war. William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed by sickness, while in Normandy—a circumstance which

15 Hoved. *Annal.*—Order. Vital.

16 H. Huntingd. lib. vi.—Gul. Malmesb. lib. iii.

gave the French king occasion to say, with the vivacity natural to his country, that he was surprised his brother of England should be so long in being delivered of his big belly. William, enraged at this levity, swore "by the "brightness and resurrection of God!" his usual oath, that, at his rising, he would present so many *lights* at the church of Nôtre Dame, as would give little pleasure to the king of France;—alluding to the usual practice, at that time, of carrying a torch to church after child-birth. On his recovery, he led an army into the Isle of France, and laid every thing waste with fire and sword. But the progress of this hostility was stopped by an accident which put an end to the English monarch's life. His horse suddenly starting aside, he bruised his belly on the pommel of the saddle; and this bruise, joined to his former bad habit of body, brought on a mortification, of which he died, at the age of sixty-one, or (as some say) sixty-four years[17]. He left Normandy and Maine to Robert: he wrote to Lanfranc, desiring him to crown his second son William king of England; and he bequeathed to Henry the possessions of his mother Matilda.

Sept. 9, 1087.

The characters of princes are best seen in their actions: I shall, however, give you a concise character of the Conqueror; for such he ultimately proved, though little more than a conditional sovereign when he first received the submissions of the English nation[18]. The spirit of William I., says a philosophic historian, was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence; and his exorbitant ambition, which lay little under the restraints of justice, and still less under

17 Wace.—Order. Vital.

18 William acted so uniformly like a conqueror, that before the end of his reign, there was scarcely one Englishman who was either earl, baron, bishop, or abbot. (Gul. Malmesb. lib. iii.—Ingulph.) Perhaps no revolution was ever attended with so complete and sudden a change of power and property, as that which was effected by the duke of Normandy. Nor was the administration of any prince ever more absolute than that of William I., though the government which he established was not exteriorly a despotism, but a feudal monarchy.

those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of reason and sound policy. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion; and he seemed equally ostentatious and ambitious of *éclat*, in his clemency and in his vengeance.

William II. (surnamed *Rufus*, or the Red, from the colour of his hair) was quickly crowned king of England, in consequence of his father's recommendatory letters to the primate; and Robert, at the same time, took peaceable possession of Normandy. But this partition of the Conqueror's dominions, though apparently made without any violence or opposition, occasioned in England many discontents, which seemed to promise a sudden revolution. The Norman barons, who possessed large estates both in England and their own country, were uneasy at the separation of those territories, and foresaw that, as it would be impossible for them to preserve long their allegiance to two masters, they must necessarily resign their ancient property or their new acquisitions. Robert's title to Normandy they esteemed incontestable: his claim to England they thought plausible: they therefore wished that this prince, who alone had any pretensions to unite the duchy and kingdom, might be put in possession of both[19].

A comparison between the personal qualities of the two princes also led the malcontents to prefer the elder. Robert was brave, open, sincere, generous; whereas William, though not less brave than his brother, was violent, haughty, tyrannical, and seemed disposed to govern more by fear than the love of his people. The bishop of Bayeux, who had been released from prison on the death of the Conqueror, enforced all these motives with the dissatisfied barons, and engaged many of them in a formal conspiracy to dethrone the king. A.D. 1088.

19 Order. Vital.

Expecting immediate support from Normandy, the conspirators hastened to put themselves in a military posture: and William, sensible of his perilous situation, endeavoured to provide against the threatened danger by gaining the affections of the English, who zealously embraced his cause, upon receiving some general promises of good treatment, and leave to hunt in the royal forests, having now lost all hopes of recovering their ancient liberties. By their assistance the king was enabled to subdue the rebels; but those Norman barons who had remained faithful to him were the only gainers. He paid little regard to the promises made to his English subjects, who still found themselves exposed to the same oppressions which they had experienced during the reign of the Conqueror, and which were augmented by the tyrannical temper of the present monarch [20]. Even the privileges of the church formed but a feeble rampart against the usurpations of William; yet the terror of his authority, confirmed by the suppression of the late insurrections, kept every one in subjection, notwithstanding the murmurs of the clergy, and preserved general tranquillity in England.

William even thought himself sufficiently powerful to disturb his brother in the possession of Normandy, and bribed several Norman barons to favour his unjust claim. The duke had also reason to apprehend danger from the intrigues of his brother Henry, who inherited more of his father's money than his other possessions, and had furnished Robert, during his preparations against England, with the sum of three thousand marks; in return for which slender supply he had been put in possession of the Cotentin, almost one-third of the duke's dominions. But these two brothers, notwithstanding their mutual jealousies,

20 *Chron. Sax.*—Gul. Malmesb. liv. iv.—The application of William, however, and the service they had rendered him, made the natives sensible of their importance by reason of their numbers; and they gradually recovered their consequence in the course of the struggles between the king and the nobles.

now united, in order to defend their territories against the ambition of the king of England, who appeared in Normandy at the head of a numerous army; and affairs seemed to be hastening to extremity, when an accommodation was brought about by the interposition of the nobility. A. D. 1090.

Prince Henry, however, disgusted at the terms of that agreement, in which he thought himself treated with neglect, retired to St. Michael's Mount, a strong fortress on the coast of Normandy, and infested the neighbouring country with his incursions. Robert and William, his two brothers, besieged him in this place, and had nearly obliged him to surrender by reason of the scarcity of water; when the elder, hearing of his brother's distress, granted him permission to obtain a supply, and also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table—a conduct which could only have been dictated by the generous but romantic spirit of chivalry that prevailed in those times, and with which the duke was strongly infected. Being reproved by William for this imprudent generosity, Robert replied, "What! shall I suffer my brother to die of thirst?—Where "shall we find another brother when he is gone?"

William, during this siege, also performed an act of generosity less suited to his character. Riding out alone to survey the fortress, he was attacked by two soldiers, and dismounted. One of the assailants drew his sword, in order to dispatch the king. "Hold, knave!" cried William, "I am the king of England." The soldier suspended his blow, and raised the king from the ground; who, charmed with the fellow's behaviour, rewarded him handsomely, and took him into his service[21].

Prince Henry was at last obliged to capitulate: and, being despoiled of all his dominions, wandered about for some time with very few attendants, and often in great poverty. A.D. 1091.

21 Gul. Malmesb. lib. iv.—M. Paris.

William was afterward engaged in humbling the Scots and Welsh, who had infested England with their incursions. He had also occasion to quell a conspiracy of his own barons, who were desirous of exalting to the throne Stephen, count of Aumale, nephew of the Conqueror. But the noise of these petty wars and commotions was quite sunk in the tumult of the Crusades, which then engaged the attention of all Europe, and have since attracted the curiosity of mankind, as the most extraordinary examples of human folly that were ever exhibited on the face of the globe. The cause and consequences of these pious enterprises I shall afterwards have occasion to consider; at present I shall only speak of them as they affect the history of England.

A.D. 1095.

The duke of Normandy, impelled by the bravery and mistaken generosity of his spirit, early enlisted himself in the first crusade; but, being always unprovided with money, he found it would be impossible for him, without some supply, to appear in a manner suitable to his rank at the head of his numerous vassals, who, transported with the general fury, were desirous of following him into Asia. He therefore resolved to mortgage his dominions, which he had not prudence to govern; and he offered them to his brother William, who kept aloof from all those fanatical and romantic warriors, for so small a sum as ten thousand marks[22]. The bargain was concluded, and William took possession of Normandy and Maine; while Robert set out for the Holy Land in pursuit of glory, and in full hopes of securing his eternal salvation.

A.D. 1096.

In the mean time William, who regarded only the things of this world, was engaged in a quarrel with Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, a Piedmontese monk, whom he wished to deprive of his see for refractory behaviour. Anselm appealed to Rome against the king's injustice; and affairs came to such extremities, that the primate, finding it

22 Hoved. *Annal.*

dangerous to remain in the kingdom, desired permission to retire beyond sea. It was granted him; but all his temporalities were confiscated. He was received with great respect by Urban II., who considered him as a martyr in the cause of religion, and even threatened the king with the sentence of excommunication for his proceedings against the primate[23]. A. D. 1097.

Anselm afterwards distinguished himself in the council of Bari, where the famous dispute between the Greek and Latin churches, relative to the *procession* of the third person of the Trinity, was agitated; namely, whether the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son, or from the Father only. He also assisted in a council at Rome, where spiritual censures were denounced against all ecclesiastics who did homage to laymen for their benefices, and all laymen who exacted such homage. The arguments used on that occasion, in favour of the clergy, are worthy of the ignorance of the age, and strongly mark the gross superstition into which the human mind was sunk. A. D. 1099.

The ceremony of feudal homage I have already mentioned. The Romish council now declared, that such submission was inconsistent with the dignity of the sacerdotal character, as well as with the independence of the church: "For," said Urban, "it is a most execrable thing, that "holy hands, appointed to perform what was never "granted to any angel, to create God the Creator, and "offer him to God his Father, for the salvation of mankind, "should be reduced to the humiliating baseness of sla-"vishly mingling with profane hands, which, besides being "soiled with rapine and bloodshed, are day and night em-"ployed in impure offices and obscene contacts[24]!"

23 Eadm. *Hist. Novorum*, lib. ii.—Order. Vital,

24 Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*—*Anglia Sacra*, vol. i.—Sim. Dunelm.—Eadmer, who was present at the council, informs us, that, on the close of this impious speech of his holiness, all the venerable fathers cried "*Amen! Amen!*"

The fanaticism of the times afforded the king of England a second opportunity of increasing his dominions. Poicton and Guienne were offered to be mortgaged to him, for the same pious purpose that had induced his brother Robert to put him in possession of Normandy and Maine. The terms were adjusted; but, before they were fulfilled, an accident put an end to William's life, and all his ambitious projects. Walter Tyrrel, a French knight, remarkable for his address in archery, attended him in the New Forest, for the purpose of hunting: and, as the king had dismounted after the chase, his companion, eager to show his dexterity, discharged an arrow at a stag which suddenly started before him. The arrow, glancing against a tree, struck William to the heart, and instantly killed him; while Tyrrel, without informing any one of the accident, put spurs to his horse, hastened to the sea-shore, embarked for France, and joined in the crusade—a penance which he imposed on himself for this involuntary crime, and which was deemed sufficient to expiate crimes of the blackest dye[25].

Aug. 2, 1100.

William II., though a man of sound understanding, appears to have been a violent and tyrannical prince, a perfidious, encroaching, and dangerous neighbour, and an unkind and ungenerous relative. His vices, however, have probably been exaggerated by the monkish writers, the only historians of those times, as he was utterly void of superstition, and had not even a decent respect for religion. Of this many examples might be adduced; but one will be sufficient. When the body of the clergy presented a petition, that he would give them leave to send a form of prayer to be used in all the churches of England, "That God "would move the heart of the king to appoint an arch- "bishop!" (for he had kept the revenues or temporalities of the see of Canterbury in his own hands for the space of

25 *Chron. Sax.*—Sim. Dunelm.

four years) he carelessly replied, "You may pray as you "please, and I will act as I please[26]." Had he lived a few years longer, he might greatly have enlarged his dominions; and, as he was the most powerful and politic prince in Europe, he might perhaps have become its arbiter. He built the Tower, Westminster-hall, and London-bridge, monuments of his greatness which still remain. His most liberal measure was the sending of an army into Scotland, in order to restore Edgar, the true heir of that crown, the son of Malcolm Canmore by Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling. The enterprise was successful.

As William Rufus was never married, and consequently could leave no lawful issue, the crown of England now belonged to his brother Robert, both by the right of birth and of solemn compact, ratified by the nobility. But as prince Henry was hunting in the New Forest when Rufus fell, he immediately galloped to Winchester, secured the royal treasure, was saluted king, and proceeded to the exercise of the sovereign authority. Sensible, however, that a crown usurped against all the rules of justice would sit very unsteady on his head, he resolved, by fair professions at least, to gain the affections of his subjects. Besides taking the usual coronation oath, to maintain the constitution, and to execute justice, he passed a charter, which was calculated to remedy many of the grievous oppressions complained of during the reign of his father and his brother; and he promised a general confirmation and observance of the laws of Edward the Confessor[27].

To fix himself more firmly on the throne, the king recalled archbishop Anselm, and reinstated him in the see of Canterbury. He also married Matilda, daughter of Malcolm, and niece to Edgar Atheling. And this marriage, more than any other measure of his reign, tended to endear Henry to his English subjects, who had felt so severely the

26 Gul. Malmesb. lib. iv. 27 M. Paris.—Hoved.

tyranny of the Normans, that they reflected with infinite regret on their former liberty, and hoped for a more equal and mild administration, when the blood of their native princes should be united with that of their new sovereigns. But the policy and prudence of Henry were in danger of being frustrated by the sudden appearance of Robert, who returned from the Holy Land about a month after the death of William II., took possession of Normandy without resistance, and made preparations for asserting his claim to the English throne.

The great reputation which Robert had acquired in the East favoured his pretensions; and the Norman barons, still impressed with apprehensions of the consequences of the separation of the duchy and kingdom, manifested the same discontent which had appeared on the accession of Rufus. Henry was therefore in danger of being dethroned: and it was only through the exhortations of archbishop Anselm that a considerable number of his subjects were engaged to oppose Robert, who had landed at Portsmouth. The two armies continued some days in sight of each other without coming to action; and, by the persuasion of the same prelate, a treaty was concluded between the brothers.

A.D. 1101.

It was agreed, that Robert should resign his pretensions to the crown of England for an annual pension of three thousand marks: that if either of the princes should die without issue, the other should succeed to his dominions: that the adherents of each should be reinstated in their honours and possessions: and that neither the king nor the duke should thenceforth countenance the enemies of each other[28]. But these conditions, though so favourable to Henry, were soon violated by his rapacity and ambition. He indeed restored the estates of Robert's adherents, but took care that they should not remain long in undisturbed

28 *Chron. Sax.*—Order. Vital.

possession; and various pretences were formed for despoiling and humbling all who, in his opinion, had either inclination or abilities to disturb his government.

Enraged at the fate of his friends, Robert imprudently ventured into England, but met with such an unfavourable reception, that he was alarmed for his own safety, and glad to purchase his escape with the loss of his pension. One indiscretion followed another. The affairs of Normandy fell into confusion; Henry went over, by invitation, to regulate them; but, instead of supporting his brother's authority, he increased the discontent by every art of bribery, intrigue, and insinuation, and at length made himself master of the duchy. The unfortunate Robert, who seemed born only to be the sport of fortune, was defeated at Tenerchebrai, and carried prisoner into England. He remained in custody above twenty-seven years, and died a captive in the castle of Cardiff, in Glamorganshire[29]. A. D. 1106.

The acquisition of Normandy was a great point of Henry's ambition, not only as it was the ancient inheritance of his family, but as it gave him considerable weight on the continent. The injustice of the usurpation, however, was a source of inquietude; and the jealousy of the French monarch gave rise to those wars which were to prove so injurious to posterity. Louis VI., in concert with the counts of Anjou and Flanders, supported the claim of William, son of Robert, to the duchy of Normandy: he even craved the assistance of the church for the true heir, and reprobated the enormity of detaining in prison so brave a prince as Robert, one of the most eminent champions of the cross. But Henry knew how to defend the rights of his crown with vigour, and yet with dexterity. He detached the count of Anjou from the alliance, by contracting his son William to that prince's

29 Gul. Malmesb. lib. v.—The story of his being deprived of his sight appears to be ill-founded.

daughter, while he gained the pope and his favourites by liberal presents and promises. Calixtus II., who

A. D. 1119.

was then in France, declared, after a conference with Henry, that of all men, whom he had ever seen, the king of England was beyond comparison the most *eloquent* and *persuasive*[30]. The complaints of the Norman prince were thenceforth disregarded.

The military operations of Louis proved as unsuccessful as his intrigues. The French and English armies engaged near Andeli, in Normandy, where William, the son of Robert, behaved with great bravery. Henry himself was in imminent danger. He was wounded in the head by a gallant Norman, named Crispin, who had followed the fortunes of William; but, rather roused than intimidated by the blow, the king collected all his might, and beat his antagonist to the ground. The English, animated by the example of their sovereign, put the French to a total rout: and an accommodation soon after took place between the two monarchs, in which the interests of young William were entirely neglected[31].

Henry's public prosperity was overbalanced by a domestic misfortune. His son William had accom-

A. D. 1120.

panied him into Normandy, but perished in his return. He was anxious to get first to land; and the captain of his vessel, being intoxicated with liquor, heedlessly ran her on a rock, where she was dashed to pieces. Beside the prince, above one hundred and forty young noblemen or knights were lost on this occasion[32]. The king was so much affected at the intelligence, that he is said never to have smiled more.

Henry had now no legitimate issue, except Matilda, the widow of the emperor Henry V., whose hand he

A. D. 1127.

afterwards bestowed on Geoffrey Plantagenet,

30 Gul. Malmesb. 31 H. Huntingd. lib. vii.—Dicet. *Hist.*
32 Hoved. *Annal.*

son of the count of Anjou. He endeavoured to secure her succession to all his dominions, and obliged the barons of Normandy and England to swear fealty to her. After six years she was delivered of a son, who received the name of Henry; and the king, farther to ensure the succession, ordered all the nobles to renew the oath which they had taken, and also to swear fealty to her infant son[33]. A.D. 1133.

The joy of this event, and the pleasure of his daughter's company, induced Henry to remain in Normandy, where he died, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirty-sixth of his reign. He was one of the most able and accomplished princes that ever filled the English throne, possessing all the qualities, both mental and personal, that could adorn his high station, or fit him for the government of an extensive territory. His learning, which procured him the name of *Beauclerc*, or the *fine scholar*, would have distinguished him in private life, and his talents would have given him an ascendant in any condition. Dec. 1, 1135.

The affairs of France, my dear Philip, and the crusades, which took their rise in that kingdom, claim your attention, before I speak of the disputed succession of Matilda, and of her son Henry Plantagenet, whose reign affords some of the most interesting spectacles in the history of England. In the mean time it will be proper to take a slight review of the change produced in our ancient constitution, and in the condition of our Saxon ancestors, by the Norman conquest or revolution.

POSTSCRIPT.

Having informed you, in my eighth letter, of the chief points of the Anglo-Saxon government, and recounted in the twelfth the improvements introduced by the great

33 Walsingh. *Hypodigma Neustriæ.*—M. Paris.

Alfred, I proceed to observe that this happy constitution was almost entirely subverted by the tyranny of the first William. The government which he substituted was a rigid feudal monarchy, or military aristocracy, in which a regular chain of subordination and service was established, from the sovereign or commander-in-chief, to the serf or villain; and which, like all feudal governments, was attended with a grievous depression of the body of the people, who were daily exposed to the insults, violences, and exactions of the nobles, whose vassals they all were, and from whose oppressive jurisdiction it was difficult and dangerous for them to appeal.

This depression, as might be expected, was more complete and humiliating in England, under the first Anglo-Norman princes, than in any other feudal government. The Conqueror, by his artful and tyrannical policy, by attainders and confiscations, had become, in the course of his reign, proprietor of almost all the lands in the kingdom. These lands, however, he could not retain, had he been even willing, in his own hands: he was under the necessity of bestowing the greater part of them on his Norman captains, or nobles, the companions of his conquest, and the instruments of his tyranny, who had led their own vassals to battle[34]. But those grants he clogged with heavy feudal services, and prestations or payments, which no one dared to refuse. He was the general of a victorious army, which was still obliged to continue in a military posture, in order to secure the possessions it had seised. And the Anglo-Norman barons, and tenants *in capite*, by knight-

34 Nothing can more strongly indicate that necessity than the following anecdote. Earl Warren, when questioned in a subsequent reign, concerning his right to the land he possessed, boldly drew his sword. "This," said he, "is my title!—William "the Bastard did not conquer England himself: the Norman barons, and my ances- "tors among the rest, were joint adventurers in the enterprise." Dugdale's *Baronage*, vol. i.

service, who, with the dignified clergy, formed the *nation-al assembly*, imposed obligations yet more severe on their vassals, the inferior landholders (consisting chiefly of English gentlemen), as well as on the body of the people, for whom they seemed to have no compassion[35].

But the rigour of the Anglo-Norman government, and the tyrannical and licentious spirit of the nobles, proved ultimately favourable to general liberty. The oppressed people looked up to the king for protection; and circum-

35 The state of England, at the death of William the Conqueror, is thus described by one of our ancient historians, who was almost contemporary with that prince. "The Normans," says he, "had now fully executed the wrath of Heaven upon the "English. There was hardly any one of that nation who possessed any power; they "were all involved in servitude and sorrow; insomuch, that to be called an English-"man was considered as a reproach. In those miserable times many oppressive "taxes and tyrannical customs were introduced. The king himself, when he had "let his lands at their full value, if another tenant came and offered more, and a "third offered still more, violated his former engagements, and gave them to him "who offered most; and the great men were inflamed with such a rage for money, "that they cared not by what means it was acquired. The more they talked of "justice, the more injuriously they acted. Those who were called justiciaries were "the fountains of all iniquity. Sheriffs and magistrates, whose peculiar duty it was "to pronounce righteous judgements, were the most cruél of all tyrants, and greater "plunderers than common thieves and robbers." (Hen. Huntingd. lib. vii.) And the author of the Saxon Chronicle, in speaking of the miseries of a subsequent reign, says, that the great barons "grievously oppressed the poor people with building "castles; and, when they were built, they filled them with wicked men, or rather "devils, who seised both men and women supposed to be possessed of any money, "threw them into prison, and put them to more cruel tortures than the martyrs "ever endured." (*Chron. Sax.* p. 238.) The truth of this melancholy description is corroborated by the testimony of William of Malmesbury.

The great power and success of the Normans rendered them licentious as well as tyrannical. This licentiousness was so great, that the princess Matilda, daughter of Malcolm Canmore, who had received her education in England, and was afterwards married to Henry I., thought it necessary to wear the religious habit, in order to preserve her person from violation. Before a great council of the Anglo-Norman clergy, she herself declared, that she had been induced by no other motive to put on the veil. And the council admitted her plea, in the following memorable words:— "When the great king William conquered this land, many of his followers, elate with "their extraordinary success, and thinking that all things ought to be subservient "to their will and pleasure, not only seised the possessions of the vanquished, but "invaded the honour of their matrons and virgins. Hence many young ladies, who "dreaded such violences, were induced to seek shelter in convents, and even to take "the veil as a farther security to their virtue." Eadm. *Hist.* lib. iii.

stances enabled them to obtain it. The defect in the title of William II. and of Henry I. induced them to listen to the complaints of their English subjects, and to redress some of their grievances. The people, pleased even with the partial relief afforded to them, became sensible of their consequence, and of their obligations to the crown; while the barons, finding themselves in quiet possession of their English estates, and apprehending no future disturbance from the natives, bore with impatience the burthens imposed upon them by William I., and to which they had readily submitted in the hour of conquest and of danger. They saw the necessity of being more indulgent to their vassals, in order to obtain sufficient force to enable them to retrench the prerogatives of the sovereign, and of connecting their cause with that of the people. And the people, always formidable by their numbers, courted by both parties, and sometimes siding with one, sometimes with the other, in the bloody contests between the crown and the barons, recovered by various progressive steps, which I shall have occasion to trace in the course of my narration, their ancient and natural right to a place in the parliament or national assembly.

Thus restored to a share in the legislature, the English commonalty felt more fully their own importance; and, by a long and vigorous struggle, maintained with unexampled perseverance, they wrested from both the king and the nobles all the other rights of a free people, of which their Anglo-Saxon ancestors had been robbed by the violent invasion and cruel policy of William the Norman. To those rights they were entitled as men, by the great law of nature and reason, which declares the *welfare* of the *whole* community to be the end of all civil government; and, as Englishmen, by inheritance. In whatever light, therefore, we view the privileges of the commons, they are RESUMPTIONS, not USURPATIONS.

In order to establish this important political truth, some of our popular writers have endeavoured to prove, that the people of England were by no means robbed of their liberty or property by William I., and that the *commons* had a *share* in the *legislature* under *all* the Anglo-Norman princes. But, as this position cannot be maintained without violating historical testimony, the advocates for prerogative have had greatly the advantage in that dispute[36]. I have therefore made the usurpations of William, in violation of his coronation oath, the basis of my argument. Usurpation can create no right, nor the exercise of illegal authority any prerogative.

36 Mr. Hume, in particular, has triumphed over every adversary. His collected arguments, supported by facts, to prove, "that the commons originally formed no "part of the Anglo-Norman parliament," are strong and satisfactory. But the following clause in the Great Charter is of itself sufficient to determine the dispute. "We will cause to be summoned," says the king, "as a COMMON COUNCIL of the "KINGDOM, the *archbishops*, *bishops*, *earls*, and *great barons*, personally, by our "letters; and besides, we will cause to be summoned, in general, by our sheriffs "and bailiffs, all *others* who HOLD of us IN CHIEF." (*Mag. Chart.* Sec. xiv.) This testimony, so full and conclusive, when duly weighed, must preclude all future controversy on the subject.

LETTER XXV.

Sketch of the French History, under Philip I. and Louis VI., with some Account of the first Crusade.

PHILIP I., as I have already observed, had been well educated, and was not deficient in capacity; but his mind had acquired a wrong bias, which prompted him too frequently to prefer his interest, or his inclinations, to his honour. His reign is not so remarkable for any thing as his

marrying Bertrade de Montfort, duchess of Anjou, while her husband and his queen were both alive. For this irregularity he was excommunicated by Urban II. in the famous council of Clermont, where the first Crusade was preached for the recovery of the Holy Land[1],—a circumstance which naturally leads me to speak of that extravagant expedition, its causes, and its consequences.

Gregory VII. among his other vast ideas, had formed, as we have seen, the project of uniting the western Christians against the Mohammedans, and of recovering Palestine from the hands of those infidels[2]; and nothing but his quarrel with the emperor Henry IV., by which he declared himself an enemy to the civil power of princes, could have obstructed the progress of this undertaking, conducted by so able a politician, at a time when the minds of men were fully prepared for such an enterprise. The work, however, was reserved for a meaner instrument; for a man whose condition could excite no jealousy, and whose head was as weak as his imagination was warm. But before I mention this man, I must say a few words of the state of the East at that time, and of the passion for pilgrimages which then prevailed in Europe.

We naturally view with veneration and delight those places which have been the residence of any illustrious personage, or the scene of any great transaction. Hence arises the enthusiasm with which the literati still visit the ruins of Athens and Rome; and hence flowed the superstitious devotion with which Christians, from the earliest ages of the church, were accustomed to visit that country where their religion had commenced, and that city in which the Messiah had died for the redemption of those who believe in his name. Pilgrimages to the shrines of saints and martyrs were also common; but, as this distant peregrination could not be performed without considerable expense,

1 Harduin. *Concil.* vol. xi. 2 See Letter XXIII.

fatigue, and danger, it appeared more meritorious than all others, and was soon considered as an expiation for almost every crime. And a prevailing opinion, which I before stated[3], respecting the Millennium, increased the number and the ardour of the credulous devotees that undertook this tedious journey. A general consternation seised the minds of Christians. Many relinquished their possessions, abandoned their friends and families, and hurried with precipitation to the Holy Land, where they imagined Christ would suddenly appear to judge the quick and the dead[4].

But the Christians, though ultimately undeceived in regard to the day of judgement, had the mortification, in these pious journeys, to see the holy sepulchre, and the other places sanctified by the presence of the Saviour, in the hands of infidels. The followers and the countrymen of Mohammed had early made themselves masters of Palestine, which the Greek empire, far in its decline, was unable to protect against so warlike an enemy. They gave little disturbance, however, to those zealous pilgrims who daily flocked to Jerusalem: they even allowed all strangers, after paying a moderate tribute, to visit the sepulchre, perform religious duties, and return in peace. But, when the Turks, a Tartar tribe who had embraced the Moslem creed, had wrested Syria from the Saracens, and taken Jerusalem, pilgrims were exposed to outrages of every kind from these fierce barbarians. And this change, coinciding with the panic of the consummation of all things, and the supposed appearance of Christ on Mount Sion, filled Europe with alarm and indignation. Every pilgrim, who returned from Palestine, related the dangers he had encountered in visiting the holy city, and described, with exaggeration, the cruelty and vexations of the Turks, who, to use the language of those zealots, not only profaned the sepulchre of the Lord by their

3 See the last note to the XXIId Letter.

4 *Chron.* Will. Godelli ap. Bouquet. *Recueil des Hist. de France,* tome x.

presence, but derided the sacred mysteries in the very place of their completion[5].

While the minds of men were thus roused, a fanatical monk, commonly known by the name of Peter the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, revived the project of Gregory VII. of leading all the forces of Christendom against the infidels, and of driving them out of the Holy Land. He had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and was so deeply affected with the danger to which that act of piety now exposed Christians, that he ran from province to province on his return, with a crucifix in his hand, exciting princes and people to this holy war; and, wherever he came, he kindled the same enthusiastic ardour with which he himself was animated.

Urban II., who had at first been doubtful of the success of such a project, at length entered into Peter's views, and summoned at Placentia a council, which was A. D. 1095. holden in the open fields, as no hall was sufficient to contain the multitude: it consisted of four thousand ecclesiastics, and thirty thousand laymen, who all declared for the war against the infidels; but none of them heartily engaged in the enterprise. Urban, therefore, found it necessary to call another council the same year at Clermont, in Auvergne, where the greatest prelates, nobles, and princes, attended; and when the pope and the hermit had concluded their pathetic exhortations, the whole assembly, as if impelled by an immediate inspiration, exclaimed with one voice: "It is the will of God!—It is the will of "God!"—words which were deemed so memorable, and believed to be so much the result of a divine influence, that they were employed as the motto on the sacred standard, and as the signal of rendezvous and battle in all the future exploits of the champions of the *Cross*, the symbol chosen by the devout combatants, in allusion to the death of Christ, as the badge of union, and affixed to

5 Eccard. *Corp. Script. Medii Ævi*, vol. i.

their right shoulder, whence their expedition derived the name of a Crusade[6].

Persons of all ranks flew to arms with the utmost ardour. Not only the gallant nobles of that age, with their martial followers, whom the boldness of a romantic enterprise might have been apt to allure, but men in the more humble and pacific stations of life, ecclesiastics of every order, and even women, concealing their sex beneath the disguise of armour, engaged with emulation in an undertaking which was deemed so sacred and meritorious. The greatest criminals were forward in a service, which they regarded as a propitiation for all their crimes. If they succeeded, they hoped to make their fortune in this world; and if they died, they fondly expected a crown of glory in the world to come. Devotion, passion, prejudice, and habit, all contributed to the same end; and the combination of so many causes produced that wonderful emigration by which Europe, loosened from its foundations, and impelled by its moving principle, seemed in one united body to precipitate itself upon Asia[7].

The adventurers soon became so numerous, that their more experienced leaders, the counts of Vermandois, Toulouse, and Blois, the duke of Normandy, and Godfrey of Bouillon, prince of Brabant, apprehended, from the unwieldy magnitude of the force, a defeat of the grand object of the expedition. They therefore permitted a vast and undisciplined multitude to go before them, under the command of Peter the Hermit, Walter the Moneyless, and other wild fanatics. A.D. 1096.

Peter and his army, before which he walked with sandals on his feet, a rope about his waist, and every other mark of monkish austerity, took the road to Constantinople, through Hungary and Bulgaria. Godescald, a German priest, and

6 Theod. Ruinart. in *Vit. Urbani II.*—Baron. *Annal. Eccles.* vol. xi.

7 These are the expressions of the Greek princess and historian, Anna Comnena.

his banditti, took the same route; and trusting that Heaven, by supernatural means, would supply all their necessities, they made no provision for subsistence on their march. But they soon found it expedient to obtain by plunder what they had vainly expected from miracles. Want is ingenious in suggesting pretences for its supply. Their fury first discharged itself upon the Jews. As the soldiers of Jesus Christ, they thought themselves authorised to take revenge upon his murderers: they accordingly fell upon those unhappy people, and put to the sword without mercy such as would not submit to baptism, seising their effects as lawful prize. In Bavaria alone twelve thousand Jews were massacred, and many thousands in the other provinces of Germany. But Jews not being every-where found, these pious robbers, who had tasted the sweets of plunder, and were under no military regulations, pillaged without distinction, until the inhabitants of the countries through which they passed rose and cut off many thousands of their number. The Hermit, however, and the remnant of his army, at length reached Constantinople, where he received a fresh supply of German and Italian vagabonds, who were guilty of the greatest disorders, pillaging even the churches[8].

Alexis Comnenus, the Greek emperor, who had applied to the princes of the Latin church for succour against the Turks, entertained a hope, and but a feeble one, of obtaining such aid as might enable him to repulse the enemy. He was, therefore, astonished to see his dominions overwhelmed by an inundation of licentious barbarians, strangers alike to order and discipline, and to hear of the multitudes that were following, under different leaders. He contented himself, however, with freeing himself, as soon as possible, from such troublesome guests, by furnishing them with vessels to transport themselves to the other side of the Bosphorus; and Peter soon saw himself in the plains of Asia, at the

8 Maimbourg, *Hist. des Croisades*, tome i.

head of a Christian army, ready to give battle to the infidels. Soliman, soltan of Nice, fell upon the disorderly crowd, and slaughtered a great number almost without resistance. Walter the Moneyless and many other leaders of equal distinction were slain; but Peter the Hermit found his way back to Constantinople, where he was considered as a maniac, who had enlisted a multitude of madmen to follow him[9].

In the mean time the more disciplined armies arrived at the imperial city, and were there joined by Boëmond, son of Robert Guiscard, from motives of policy rather than piety. Having no other inheritance than the small principality of Tarentum, and his own valour, he took advantage of the epidemic enthusiasm of the times to assemble under his banner ten thousand horsemen, well armed, and some infantry, with which he hoped to conquer a few provinces either from the Christians or Moslems. His presence alarmed the emperor Alexis, with whom he had been formerly at war. But the refined policy of that prince, who caressed those rapacious allies whom he wished to ruin, diverted all his apprehensions of injury from Boëmond, or the other leaders of the crusade. He furnished them with provisions, and transported them safely into Asia; after having conciliated their affections by presents and promises, and engaged them to do him homage for the lands they should conquer from the Turks[10].

A. D. 1097.

Asia, like Europe, was then divided into a number of little states, comprehended under the great ones. The Turkish princes paid an empty homage to the khalif of Bagdad, but were in reality his masters; and the soltans, who were very numerous, weakened still farther the empire of Mohammed by continual wars with each other, the necessary consequence of divided sway. The soldiers of the Cross, therefore, who, when mustered on the banks of the Bosphorus, are said to have amounted to one hundred

9 Annæ Comnenæ *Alex.* 10 Maimbourg, ubi sup.

thousand horsemen, and six hundred thousand foot, were sufficient (even if we subtract a very large number from this exaggerated account) to have conquered all Asia, had they been united under one head, or commanded by leaders that observed any concert in their operations. But they were unhappily conducted by men of the most independent, intractable spirit, unacquainted with discipline, and enemies to civil or military subordination. Their zeal, however, their bravery, and their irresistible force, still carried them forward, and advanced them to the great end of their enterprise, in spite of the scarcity of provisions, the excesses of fatigue, and the influence of unknown climes. After an obstinate siege, they took Nice, the seat of old A. D. 1098. Soliman, whose army they had twice defeated: they made themselves masters of Antioch, the seat of another soltan, and greatly impaired the strength of the Turks, who had so long tyrannised over the Arabs[11].

The khalif of Egypt, whose alliance the Christians had hitherto courted, now recovered his authority in Jerusalem, and sent ambassadors to the leaders of the crusade, informing them, that they might perform their religious vows, if they would come disarmed to that city. His overtures, however, were rejected. He was required to yield up the city to the Christians; and, on his refusal, the champions of the Cross advanced to the siege of Jerusalem, the acquisition of which they considered as the consummation of their labours.

These pious adventurers were now greatly diminished by the detachments they had made, and the disasters they had suffered: and it is even said that they did not exceed twenty thousand foot, and fifteen hundred horse, while A. D. 1099. the garrison of Jerusalem consisted of forty thousand men. But, be that as it may, after a siege of five weeks, they took the city by assault, and put

11 Gul. Malmesb. lib. iv.—H. Huntingd. lib. vii.—Maimbourg, tome i.

the garrison and inhabitants to the sword without distinction. Arms protected not the brave, nor submission the timid: no age or sex received mercy; infants perished by the same sword that pierced their mothers. The streets of Jerusalem were covered with heaps of slain; and the shrieks of agony or despair still resounded from every house; when these triumphant warriors, glutted with slaughter, threw aside their arms, yet streaming with blood, and advanced with naked feet and bended knees to the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace! sang anthems to that Redeemer, who had purchased their salvation by his death; and, while dead to the calamities of their fellow-creatures, dissolved in tears for the sufferings of the Messiah[12]!—So inconsistent is human nature with itself; and so easily, as the philosophic Hume remarks, does the most effeminate superstition associate both with the most heroic courage and with the fiercest barbarity.

About the same time that this great event happened in Asia, where Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen king of Jerusalem, and some other Christian leaders settled in their new conquests, Urban II., the author of the crusade, and the queen of France, died in Europe. In consequence of these deaths, Philip I., who still continued to live with the countess of Anjou, was absolved, by the new pope, from the sentence of excommunication denounced in the council of Clermont. But although this absolution quieted in some measure his domestic troubles, his authority, which the thunder of the church, together with his indolent and licentious course of life, had ruined, was far from being restored. The nobles more and more affected independence: they insulted him every hour; plundered his subjects; and entirely cut off the communication between Paris and Orléans[13].

In order to remedy these evils, Philip associated his son

12 M. Paris.—Order. Vital.—Vertot, *Hist. des Chev. de Malt.* tome i.

13 Order. Vital.

A.D. 1100. Louis in the government, or, at least, declared him, with the consent of the nobility, his successor. This young prince was, in all respects, the reverse of his father; active, vigorous, affable, generous, and free from the vices incident to youth. He saw that in a state so corrupted nothing could be done but by force; he therefore remained almost continually in the field, with a small body of troops about him, and these he employed against all the nobles who would not listen to the dictates of justice and equity, but treated the laws of their country with derision. A.D. 1102. He demolished their castles: he compelled them to make restitution to such as they had pillaged, and he forced them to abandon the lands they had usurped from the clergy: yet all these rigours he executed in a manner so disinterested, and with so indisputable a zeal for the public welfare, that he gained the affections of the virtuous part of the nobility, and the reverence of the people, while he restored order to the state, and preserved the monarchy from subversion [14].

This prince, who is commonly called by the old historians Louis the Gross, from his great size in the latter part of July 29, 1108. his life, succeeded his father when he was about thirty years of age. He engaged in a long and desultory war against Henry I. of England, a powerful vassal, whom it was his interest to humble. The war was carried on with a variety of fortunes, but without producing any remarkable event, except what I have related in the history of England, or any alteration in the state of either kingdom [15].

A peace was at length concluded between the two rival A.D. 1128. princes; after which Louis VI. devoted himself to the regulation of the interior polity of his kingdom, and humbled or over-awed the great vassals of the crown, so as to procure universal tranquillity. This he ac-

14 Order. Vital.—Sug. *Vit. Lud. Grossi.*

15 See Letter XXIV.

complished, by establishing the commons or third estate, by enfranchising the bondmen, and by diminishing the exorbitant authority of the signorial jurisdictions; sending commissaries into the provinces to receive the complaints and redress the wrongs of such as had been oppressed by the dukes and counts, and every-where encouraging appeals to the royal judges. But, in the midst of his prosperity, he fell into a languishing disorder, occasioned by his excessive corpulence; and when his death seemed to approach, he ordered his son to be called to him, and gave him the following excellent advice. "By this sign," said he (drawing the signet from his finger, and putting it on that of the prince), "I invest you with sovereign au-"thority; but remember, that it is nothing but a public "employment, to which you are called by Heaven, and "for the exercise of which you must render an account "in the world to come[16]."

The king unexpectedly recovered; but he would never afterwards use any of the ensigns of royalty. He afterwards procured a considerable accession of territory to the French crown. William duke of Guienne, and earl of Poictou, desirous of making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella, bequeathed his extensive territories to his daughter Eleanor, on condition of her marrying young Louis, already crowned king of France; and the duke dying in that pilgrimage, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Bourdeaux, where Louis VII. was solemnly inaugurated as lord of Guienne and Poictou[17].

After a reign of twenty-nine years, Louis VI. died at Paris, in the sixtieth year of his age. A better man, historians agree, never graced the throne of France; but, with the addition of certain qualities, his countrymen say he might have made a better king. Posterity, however, may not perhaps be inclined to think

Aug. 4, 1137.

16 Sug. *Vit. Lud. Grossi.*—Henault, *Hist. Chronologique*, tome i. 17 Id. ib.

worse of his character, when they are told that the qualities he wanted were hypocrisy and dissimulation, and that his vices were honesty and sincerity, which led him to despise flattery, and indulge himself in a manly freedom of speech.

We should now, my dear Philip, return to the history of England; but the second crusade, which was conducted by the sovereigns of France and Germany, makes it necessary to carry farther the affairs of the continent.

LETTER XXVI.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, from the Death of Henry V. to the Election of Frederic I., surnamed Barbarossa.

AT the death of Henry V. it was generally supposed that the states would confer the empire on one of his nephews, Conrad, duke of Franconia, or Frederic, duke of Suabia, who were princes of great merit; but Albert, archbishop of Mentz, found means to influence the German chiefs to give their suffrages in favour of Lothaire, duke of Saxe-Supplembourg, who had supported him in all his contests with the late emperor. This prince was accordingly crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, in presence of the pope's nuncio. His two competitors neglected nothing in their power to obtain the throne. But, after a spirited opposition, they dropped their pretensions, and were reconciled to Lothaire, who honoured them with his regard and friendship [1].

A. D. 1125.

The first expedition of the new emperor was against the Bohemians, whom he obliged to sue for peace, and do homage to the empire. He next marched into Italy, where

1 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.—Heiss. lib. ii. cap. xi.

the affairs of the church were in disorder. Innocent II. had succeeded Honorius II. by virtue of a canonical election; notwithstanding which, Peter Leo, the grandson of a wealthy Jew, was also proclaimed pope by the name of Anacletus, and kept possession of Rome by means of his money, whilst his rival was obliged to retire into France, the common asylum of distressed popes. Lothaire espoused the cause of Innocent, with whom he had an interview at Liege; accompanied him to Rome at the head of an army, and re-established him in the papal chair, in spite of all the efforts of Anacletus [2]. A.D. 1130. A.D. 1132.

After being solemnly crowned at Rome, the emperor returned to Germany; where, by the advice of Ernerius, a learned professor of the Roman law, he ordered that justice should be administered in the empire according to the Digest of Justinian, a copy of which was, about this time, found in Italy [3]. In the mean time Roger, duke of Apulia, who had become king of Sicily, raised an army in favour of Anacletus, and made himself master of almost all the places belonging to the holy see. Innocent retired to Pisa, which was then one of the most considerable trading cities in Europe, and again implored the assistance of Lothaire. The emperor did not desert him in his adversity: he put himself at the head of a powerful army, and, by the help of the Pisans, soon recovered all the patrimony of St. Peter. The pope was re-conducted in triumph to Rome; a circumstance which so much affected Anacletus, that he fell a martyr to the success of his competitor, literally dying of grief.

The emperor afterwards attacked the king of Sicily with success, and deprived him of Apulia and Calabria, which he transferred to Renaud, one of his own relatives [4]. On his

2 Jean de Launes, *Hist. du Pontificat du Pape Innocent II.*

3 On this subject, which is involved in controversy, see Hen. Brenchmann, *Hist. Pandect.*, and Murat. *Antiq. Ital.* vol. ii.

4 *Annal de l'Emp.* tome i.

return to Germaay, he was seised with a dangerous distemper, which carried him off, near Trent. He
Dec. 1137. was distinguished by a passionate love of peace, and an exact attention to the administration of public justice.

Conrad, duke of Franconia, was now elected emperor; but the throne was disputed by Henry the Haughty, duke of Bavaria, the name of whose family was Welf or Guelph: hence those who espoused his party were called Guelphs. Henry died during this contest, after being divested of his dominions by the princes of the empire; but the
A.D. 1140. war was still carried on against the emperor by Guelph, the duke's brother, and Roger king of Sicily. The imperial army was commanded by Frederic, duke of Suabia, who, being born at the village of Hieghibelin, gave to his soldiers the name of Ghibelins; an epithet by which the imperial party was distinguished in Italy, while the pope's adherents became famous under that of Guelphs[5].

Duke Guelph and his principal followers were besieged in the castle of Weinsberg, and, having sustained great loss in a sally, were obliged to surrender at discretion. The emperor, however, instead of using his good fortune with rigour, granted the duke, and his chief officers, permission to retire unmolested. But the duchess, suspecting the generosity of Conrad, with whose enmity against her husband she was well acquainted, begged that she, and the other women in the castle, might be allowed to come out with as much as each of them could carry, and be conducted to a place of safety. Her request was granted, and the evacuation was immediately performed; when the emperor and his army, who expected to see every lady loaded with jewels, gold, and silver, beheld, to their astonishment, the duchess and her fair companions staggering beneath the weight of their husbands. The tears ran down Conrad's
A.D. 1141. cheeks: he applauded their conjugal tenderness,

5 Murat. *Dissertat. de Guelph. et Guibel.*—Sigon. lib. xi.—Krant. *Sax.* lib. viii.

and an accommodation with Guelph and his adherents was the consequence of this act of female heroism [6].

While these incidents occurred in Germany, new disorders broke out in Italy. The people of Rome formed a design of re-establishing the commonwealth, retrieving the sovereignty of their city, and abolishing the temporal dominion of the popes. Lucius II. marched against the rebels, and was killed at the foot of the Capitol; but Eugenius III., his successor, found means to reduce them to obedience, and preserve the authority of the apostolic see [7]. A.D. 1145.

This pontiff afterwards countenanced the second crusade against the Saracens, preached by St. Bernard, in which the emperor and the king of France engaged, as you will soon more particularly learn. Another crusade was preached against the Moors of Spain, in which a great number of Germans, from the neighbourhood of the Rhine and Weser, engaged; and the Saxons, about the same time, undertook a crusade against the pagans of the North, whom they cut off in thousands, without making one convert [8]. A.D. 1147.

Nothing remarkable happened in the empire, after the return of Conrad III. from the East, except the death of prince Henry, his eldest son, who had been elected king of the Romans. This event greatly affected the emperor, who died soon after; and his nephew Frederic, duke of Suabia, surnamed Barbarossa, was raised to the imperial throne by the unanimous voice of the princes and nobles both of Italy and Germany. Feb. 15, 1152.

6 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. xii.

7 Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. xiv.—Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. iii.

8 Id. ibid.

LETTER XXVII.

History of France under Louis VII. till the Divorce of Queen Eleanor, with some Account of the second Crusade.

LOUIS VII. (frequently called the Young), after he had enjoyed some years of peace, found himself engaged in one of those civil wars which the feudal government rendered unavoidable; and having in an expedition A.D. 1143. into Champagne, made himself master of the town of Vitri, he ordered it to be set on fire. In consequence of this inhuman order, thirteen hundred persons, who had taken refuge in the church, perished in the flames [1]. This unjustifiable act made a deep impression upon the king's mind, and prepared the way for a second crusade, which now demands our attention.

The power of the Christians of the East gradually declined in those countries which they had conquered. The little kingdom of Edessa had already been taken by the Turks, and Jerusalem itself was threatened. Europe was solicited for a new armament; and, as the French had begun the first inundation, they were again applied to, in hopes of a second.

Pope Eugenius III., to whom the deputies from the East had been sent, wisely pitched upon Bernard, A.D. 1145. abbot of Clairvaux, as the instrument of this pious warfare. Bernard was learned for those times, naturally eloquent, austere in his life, irreproachable in his morals, enthusiastically zealous, and inflexible in his purpose. He had long enjoyed the reputation of a saint, was heard as an oracle, and revered as a prophet. It is not very surprising, therefore, that he found means to per-

1 Gul. Tyr. *Gest. Ludovic. VII.*

suade the king of France, that there was no other method of expiating his guilt but by an expedition to the Holy Land.

At Vezelai, in Burgundy, a scaffold was erected in the market-place, on which St. Bernard appeared by the side of Louis VII. The saint spoke first; the king seconded him, after taking the cross; and the holy example was followed by all present, among whom were many of the chief nobility [2]. A.D. 1146.

Suger, abbot of St. Denis, then prime minister, a man very different from Bernard, endeavoured in vain to dissuade the king from abandoning his dominions, by telling him that he might make a much more suitable atonement for his guilt by remaining at home, and governing his kingdom in a wise and prudent manner. The eloquence of St. Bernard, and the madness of the times, prevailed over reason and sound policy. Suger, however, retained his opinion; and made no scruple of foretelling the inconveniences that would attend an expedition into Palestine, whilst Bernard made himself answerable for its success, and extolled it with an enthusiasm that passed for inspiration.

From France this fanatical orator went to preach the crusade in Germany; where, by the force of his irresistible eloquence, he prevailed on the emperor Conrad III.; his nephew Frederic, and an infinite number of persons of all ranks, to take the cross; promising them, in the name of God, victory over the infidels. He ran from city to city, every-where communicating his enthusiasm, and, if we believe the historians of those times, working miracles. It is not indeed pretended that he restored the dead to life; but the blind received sight, the lame walked, the sick were healed. And to these bold assertions we may add the extraordinary circumstance, that while St. Bernard's eloquence operated so powerfully on the minds of the Germans, he always preached to them in French, a lan-

2 *Epist. Ludovic. ad Suger.*

guage which they did not understand! or in Latin, equally unintelligible to the body of the people [3].

The hope of certain victory drew after the emperor and the king of France the greater part of the knights of their dominions; and it is said that in each army there were reckoned seventy thousand men in complete armour, with a prodigious number of light horse, besides infantry; so that we cannot well reduce this second emigration to less than three hundred thousand persons.

The Germans took the field first, the French followed; and the same excesses that had been committed by the warriors of the first crusade were renewed by those of the second. Hence Manuel Comnenus, who now filled the throne of Constantinople, was disquieted with the same apprehensions which the former enterprise had raised in the mind of his grandfather Alexis. If the Greek emperor behaved ungenerously to them, it must therefore be ascribed to their regularity of their own conduct, which made craft necessary where force was unequal; especially as Manuel is represented, on all other occasions, as a prince of great generosity and magnanimity. But the mortality which prevailed in the German army, near the plains of Constantinople, may be fully accounted forfrom intemperance and the change of climate, without supposing that the wells were poisoned, or that lime was mingled with the flour.

A.D. 1147.

After Conrad had passed the Bosphorus, he acted with that imprudence which seems inseparable from such romantic expeditions. As the principality of Antioch was yet in being, he might have joined those Christians who remained in Syria, and there have waited for the king of France. Their numbers united would have ensured them success. But, instead of such a rational measure, the emperor, jealous both of the prince of Antioch and the king of France, marched immediately into the middle of Asia

3 Henault, *Hist. Chronol.* tome i.—*Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.

Minor: where the soltan of Iconium, a more experienced general, drew his heavy German cavalry among the rocks, and cut his army in pieces. Conrad fled to Antioch; went to Jerusalem as a pilgrim, instead of appearing there as the leader of an army; and returned to Europe with a very small force [4]. A. D. 1148.

The king of France was not more successful in his enterprise. He fell into the same snare that had deceived the emperor; and, being surprised among the rocks near Laodicea, was worsted, as Conrad had been. But Louis met with a domestic misfortune that gave him more uneasiness than the loss of his army. Queen Eleanor was suspected of an amour with the prince of Antioch, at whose court her husband had taken refuge. She is even said to have forgotten her fatigues in the arms of a young Turk: and the conclusion of the expedition was, that Louis, like Conrad, returned to Europe with the wreck of a great army, after visiting the holy sepulchre, and being dishonoured by his pious consort. Thousands of ruined families in vain exclaimed against St. Bernard for his deluding prophecies: he excused himself by the example of Moses; who, like him, he said, had promised to conduct the Israelites into a happy country, and yet saw the first generation perish in the desert [5]. A.D. 1149.

Louis, more delicate than politic, annulled (soon after his return) his marriage with Eleanor, who immediately espoused Henry Plantagenet, presumptive heir to the crown of England; an inheritance which the accession of power arising from this alliance enabled him to obtain, while France lost the fine provinces of Guienne and Poictou, the hereditary possessions of the queen. But, before I treat of that subject, we must take a view of England during the introductory reign.

4 Otho de Frising.—Gul. Tyr.

5 Gul. Tyr. *Gest. Ludovic. VII.*—Henault, *Hist. Chronol.* tome i.

LETTER XXVIII.

Of the Affairs of England during the Reign of Stephen.

HENRY I., my dear Philip (as you have had occasion to see), left his dominions to his daughter Matilda; and as the nobility, both of England and Normandy, had sworn fealty to her, she had reason to expect the inheritance of both states. But the repugnance of the feudal barons to female succession prevailed over their good faith, and paved the way for the usurpation of Stephen, count of Boulogne, son of the count of Blois, and grandson of the Conqueror by his daughter Adela.

A. D. 1135.

Stephen was a prince of vigour and ability: but the manner in which he obtained the crown of England, obliged him to grant exorbitant privileges to the nobility and clergy, who might be said to command the kingdom. The barons erected numerous castles; garrisoned them with their own troops; and, when offended, bade defiance to their sovereign, while wars among themselves were carried on with the utmost fury in every quarter. They even assumed the right of coining money, and of exercising, without appeal, every act of jurisdiction; and the inferior gentry, and the people, finding no guardianship from the laws during this total dissolution of sovereign authority, were obliged to pay court to some neighbouring chieftain, and to purchase his protection, not only by yielding to his exactions, but by assisting him in his rapine upon others [1].

A. D. 1136.

While affairs continued in this distracted situation, David king of Scotland appeared at the head of a considerable army, in defence of his niece Matilda's title; and, penetrating into Yorkshire, ravaged the whole country. These

1 Gul. Malmesb. *Hist. Novel.* lib. i.

barbarous outrages incensed the northern nobility, who might otherwise have been inclined to join him, and proved the ruin of Matilda's cause. The earl of Albemarle, and other powerful nobles, assembled an army at Northallerton, where a great battle was fought, called the *Battle of the Standard*, from a high crucifix erected by the English on a waggon, and carried along with the army as a military ensign. The Scots were routed with great slaughter, and the king narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the English army[2]. Aug. 22, 1138.

This success over-awed the malcontents in England, and might have given stability to Stephen's throne, had he not been so elated by prosperity as to engage in a contest with the clergy, who were at that time an over-match for any monarch. They acted entirely as barons; built castles, employed military power against their sovereign or their neighbours, and thereby increased those disorders which it was their duty to prevent, while they claimed an exemption from all civil jurisdiction, and attracted popularity by the sacredness of their character. The bishop of Salisbury, whose castle had been seised by order of the king, appealed to the pope; and had not Stephen and his partisans employed menaces, and even shown a disposition of executing vengeance by the hands of the soldiery, affairs would soon have come to extremity between the crown and the mitre. A.D. 1139.

Matilda, encouraged by these discontents, and invited by the rebellious clergy, landed in England, accompanied by Robert earl of Glocester, natural son of the late king, and a retinue of a hundred and forty knights. She fixed her residence at Arundel castle, whose gates were opened to her by Adelaide of Louvain, the relict of king Henry. Her party daily increased; she was soon joined by several barons: war raged in all parts of Sept. 30.

2 R. Hagulst.—Ailred. de *Bell. Standard* i.

A.D. 1140. the kingdom; and it was carried on with so much fury, that the land was left uncultivated, and the instruments of husbandry were destroyed or abandoned. A grievous famine, the natural consequence of such disorders, equally affected both parties, and reduced the spoilers, as well as the defenceless people, to extreme want[3].

Such was the wretched state of the nation, when an unexpected event seemed to promise some mitigation of the public calamities. The royal army was defeated near the castle of Lincoln; and Stephen himself, surrounded by the enemy, and borne down by numbers, was made prisoner, after displaying extraordinary valour. He was conducted to Glocester, thrown into prison, and ignominiously fettered. But he was soon released in exchange for earl Robert, Matilda's brother, who was no less the soul of one party than Stephen was of the other; and the civil war was prosecuted with greater fury than ever[4].

Feb. 2, 1141.

The weakness of both parties, however, at last produced a tacit cessation of arms; and the empress Matilda retired into Normandy. But an event soon after happened, which threatened a revival of hostilites in England. Prince Henry, the son of Matilda and Geoffrey Plantagenet, had entered his seventeenth year, and was desirous of receiving the honour of knighthood from his grand-uncle, the king of Scotland. For this purpose he passed through England with a great retinue, and was visited by the most considerable of his partisans, whose hopes he roused by his dexterity and vigour in all manly exercises, and his prudence in every occurrence. He remained some time in Scotland, where he increased in reputation; and on his return to Normandy he was invested in that duchy, with the consent of his mother. On his father's

A. D. 1148.

A. D. 1149.

3 *Chron. Sax.*—*Gest. Reg. Stephani.*

4 Gul. Malmesb. *Hist. Nov.* lib. ii.—H. Huntingd. lib. viii.

death, he took possession of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, and, soon after, espoused the heiress of Guienne and Poictou, whom Louis VII. had divorced, as I have already observed, on account of her gallantries. This marriage rendered the young duke a formidable rival both to Louis and Stephen; and the prospect of his rising fortune had such an effect in England, that the archbishop of Canterbury refused to anoint Eustace, Stephen's son, as his successor, and retired beyond sea, to avoid the fury of the enraged monarch[5]. A. D. 1151.

As soon as Henry was informed of these dispositions in the people, he invaded England. Stephen advanced with a superior force to meet him; and a decisive action was daily expected, when the nobles of both parties, terrified with the prospect of farther bloodshed and confusion, interposed with their good offices, and set on foot a negotiation between the contending princes. The death of Eustace, which happened during the course of the treaty, facilitated its conclusion; and a convention was at length adjusted, by which it was agreed, that Stephen should possess the crown during his life; that justice should be administered in his name, even in the provinces which had submitted to his rival; and that Henry, on Stephen's death, should succeed to the kingdom of England, and William, Stephen's son, to Boulogne and his patrimonial estate[6]. A. D. 1153.

All the barons swore to the observance of this treaty, and did homage to Henry as heir of the crown. He soon after retired from the kingdom; and Stephen's death, which quickly followed, prevented those jealousies and feuds which were likely to have ensued in so delicate a situation. The character of Stephen is differently represented by historians; but all allow that he possessed in- Oct. 25, 1154

5 Gul. Malmesb. *Hist. Nov.* lib. ii.—H. Huntingd. lib. viii.
6 *Annal. Waverl.*—Brompton.

dustry, activity, and courage, to a great degree; and, if he had succeeded by a just title, he seems to have been well qualified to promote the happiness and prosperity of his subjects, notwithstanding the miseries that England suffered in his reign[7].

[7] These miseries are thus described by a contemporary historian: "All England "wore a face of desolation and wretchedness. Multitudes abandoned their beloved "country, and went into voluntary exile: others, forsaking their own houses, built "wretched huts in the church-yards, hoping for protection from the sacredness of "the place. Whole families, after sustaining life as long as they could, by eating "herbs, roots, and the flesh of dogs and horses, at last died of hunger;—and you "might see many pleasant villages without a single inhabitant of either sex." *Gest. Reg. Steph.*

LETTER XXIX.

History of England, during the Reign of Henry II.; with an Account of the Affairs of France.

I HAVE already observed, my dear son, that, before the conquest of England by the duke of Normandy, this island was as distinct from the rest of the world in politics as in situation. The English had then neither enemies nor allies on the continent. But the foreign dominions of William and his successors connected them with the kings and great vassals of France; and while the opposite pretensions of the popes and the emperors in Italy produced a continual intercourse between Germany and that country, the two great monarchs of France and England formed, in another part of Europe, a separate system, and carried on their wars and negotiations, without meeting either with opposition or support from their neighbours; the extensive confederacies by which the European potentates were afterward united, and made the guardians of each

other, being then totally unknown. We may therefore suppose that Louis VII. observed with terror the rising greatness of the house of Anjou or Plantagenet, whose continental dominions nearly added one third of the whole French monarchy to the possessions of the new king of England. The jealousy occasioned by this alarming circumstance, however, as we shall have occasion to see, not only saved France from falling a prey to England, but exalted that kingdom to the height of grandeur which it long enjoyed. The king of England soon became a kind of foreigner in his continental dominions; and the other powerful vassals of the French crown were less offended at the oppression of a co-vassal, than pleased at the expulsion of the Anglo-Normans.

But, as these important consequences could not be foreseen by human wisdom, the king of France had maintained a strict union with Stephen, in order to prevent the succession of Henry. The sudden death of the usurper, however, disappointed the hopes of Louis. Henry was received in England with the acclamations of all classes of people; and he began his reign with re-establishing justice and good order, to which the kingdom had been long a stranger. He dismissed the foreign mercenaries retained by Stephen; and, that he might restore authority to the laws, he caused the new castles, which had proved so many sanctuaries to rebels and free-booters, to be demolished[1]. To conciliate still farther the affections of his subjects, he voluntarily confirmed that charter of liberties which had been granted by his grandfather, Henry I.[2].

Tranquillity was no sooner restored to England, than Henry had occasion to visit his foreign dominions. Having settled the affairs of those provinces, he returned to repress the incursions of the Welsh, who gave him much trouble, but at length submitted. A quarrel A. D. 1157.

1 Gervas. *Chron.*—Gul. Neubrig. lib. ii.
2 See Blackstone's *Law Tracts*, vol. ii.

afterwards broke out between Louis and Henry, relative to the county of Toulouse; and a war commenced between the two monarchs. But these hostilities produced no memorable event, were stopped by a cessation of arms, and soon terminated in a peace, through the mediation of the pope.

A. D. 1159.

This war, so insignificant in itself, is remarkable for the manner in which it was conducted. An army formed of feudal vassals, as I have had occasion to observe, commonly proved very intractable and undisciplined, both on account of the independent spirit of the men who composed it, and because the commissions were not bestowed by the choice of the sovereign, in reward of the military talents and services of the officers. Each baron conducted his own vassals, and his rank in the army was greater or less, in proportion to the value of his property. Even the chief command, under that of the prince, was often attached to birth; and as the military vassals were obliged to serve only forty days at their own charge, the state reaped very little benefit from their attendance. Henry, sensible of these inconveniences, levied upon his vassals in Normandy, and other provinces remote from the seat of war, a sum of money in lieu of their service: and this commutation, by reason of the greater distance, was still more advantageous to his English vassals. He therefore imposed a *scutage* of three pounds upon each knight's fee; a condition to which, though it was unusual, the military tenants readily submitted. With this money he levied an army which was more at his disposal, and whose service was more durable and constant: and, in order to facilitate those levies, he enlarged the privileges of the people, and rendered them less dependent on the barons.

Having thus regulated his civil and military affairs, and accommodated his differences with Louis, Henry began to cast his eye upon the church, where abuses of every kind prevailed. The clergy, among their

A. D. 1162.

other inventions to obtain money, had inculcated the necessity of penance as an atonement for sin. They had also introduced the practice of paying large sums of money as a composition for such penances. Thus the sins of the people became sources of revenue to the priests; and the king computed, that, by this invention alone, they levied more money from his subjects than flowed into the royal treasury by all the methods of public supply[3]. Feeling for his oppressed people, he required that a layman, nominated by him, should for the future be present in all ecclesiastical courts, and that the consent of this officer should be necessary to every composition made by sinners for their spiritual offences.

But the grand difficulty was, how to carry this order into execution, as the ecclesiastics, in that age, had renounced all immediate subordination to the civil power. They openly claimed exemption, in cases of criminal accusation, from a trial before courts of justice. Spiritual penalties alone could be inflicted on their offences; and, as the clerical habit was thus become a protection for all enormities, they could not fail to increase. Accordingly crimes of the deepest dye were frequently committed with impunity by ecclesiastics; and it was found upon inquiry, that no less than a hundred murders had been perpetrated since the king's accession, by men in holy orders, who had never been called to account for these offences against the laws of nature and society[4].

In order to bring such criminals to justice, as the first step towards his projected reformation of the church, and in the hope of restoring union between the civil and ecclesiastical power, so necessary in every government for the maintenance of peace and harmony, Henry exalted Thomas Becket, his chancellor, and the first man of English descent who had occupied an eminent station since the Norman conquest, to the see of Canterbury, on the death of arch-

3 Fitz-Steph. *Vit. Sancti Thomæ.* 4 Gul. Neubr. lib. ii.

bishop Theobald; rightly judging, that if the present opportunity should be neglected, and the usurpations of the clergy allowed to proceed, the crown would be in danger, from the predominating superstition of the people, of falling under subjection to the mitre.

Becket, while chancellor, was pompous in his retinue, sumptuous in his furniture, and luxurious in his table, beyond what England had seen in a subject. His house was a place of education for the sons of the chief nobility, and the king himself frequently condescended to partake of his chancellor's entertainments. His amusements were as gay as his manner of life was splendid and elegant. He employed himself at leisure hours in hunting, hawking, gaming, and horsemanship. His complaisance and good-humour had rendered him agreeable, and his industry and abilities useful to his master. He was well acquainted with the king's intention of retrenching, or rather confining within ancient bounds, all ecclesiastical privileges; and, as he had hitherto seemed disposed to comply with every advance to that purpose, Henry considered him as the most proper person he could place at the head of the English church. But no prince of so much penetration ever so little understood the character of his minister.

Becket was no sooner installed in the see of Canterbury, which rendered him the second person in the kingdom, than he secretly aspired at being the first in real power, and totally altered his manner of life. He affected the greatest austerity, and the most rigid mortification: he wore sackcloth next his skin, which he changed so seldom that it was filled with dirt and vermin. His usual diet was bread, his drink water: he tore his back with the frequent discipline which he inflicted upon it; and he daily washed on his knees, in imitation of Jesus Christ, the feet of thirteen beggars, whom he afterwards dismissed with presents[5]. Every

5 Fitz-Steph. *Vit. S. Thom.*

one who made profession of sanctity was admitted to his conversation, and returned full of panegyrics on the humility as well as piety and mortification of the primate, whose aspect now wore the appearance of intense thought and profound devotion. And all men of penetration saw that he was meditating some great design, and that the ambition and ostentation of his character had taken a new and more dangerous direction.

This champion of the church (for such he now declared himself) did not even wait till the king had matured his projects for the diminution of ecclesiastical power: he himself began hostilities, and endeavoured to over-awe his sovereign by the intrepidity and boldness of his measures. But although Henry found that he had mistaken the character of the person whom he had promoted to the primacy, he determined not to desist from his former intention of retrenching clerical usurpations; and an event soon occurred which gave him a plausible pretence for putting his design in execution, and brought matters to a crisis with the archbishop.

A clergyman in Worcestershire, having debauched a gentleman's daughter, had proceeded to murder the father. The general indignation against so enormous a crime made the king insist that the ecclesiastical assassin should be delivered up to the civil magistrate, and receive condign punishment; but Becket maintained that no greater punishment ought to be inflicted upon him than degradation. Henry took advantage of the incident to attack all the usurpations of the clergy, and to determine at once those controversies which daily multiplied between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. He summoned an assembly of all the prelates of England, and put to them this concise question:—"Are you, or are you not, willing to submit "to the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom?" As the bishops answered in equivocal and unsatisfactory terms, he

A.D. 1163.

A. D. 1164. convoked at Clarendon a general council, for the decision of that important question. The barons were gained to the king's party, either by the reasons he urged or by his superior authority, while the bishops were over-awed by the general combination against them. And the following laws, among others, commonly called the Constitutions of Clarendon, were voted without opposition: "That no chief tenant of the crown should be ex-"communicated, or have his lands put under an interdict, "without the king's consent; that no appeals in spiritual "causes should be carried before the holy see, nor any "clergyman be suffered to leave the kingdom, unless with "the king's permission; that laymen should not be accused "in spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable pro-"moters and witnesses; and lastly," which was the great object aimed at, "that churchmen, accused of any crime, "should be tried in the civil courts[6]."

These articles were well calculated to prevent the principal abuses in ecclesiastical affairs, and put a final stop to the usurpations of the church; and, having been passed in a national and civil assembly, they fully established the superiority of the legislature over all papal decrees and spiritual canons. But as Henry knew the bishops would take the first opportunity to deny the authority which had enacted these constitutions, he resolved that they should affix their seals to them, and give a promise to observe them. With this view they were reduced to writing; and none of the prelates dared to oppose the king's will except Becket, who peremptorily refused to set his seal to the constitutions, though he promised *legally*, with *good faith*, and without *fraud* or *reserve*, to regard them, and even took an oath to that purpose[7].

Henry, thinking that he had now finally prevailed in this

6 Gervas. *Chron.*—Matth. Par. 7 Hoved. *Annal.*—Gervas. *Chron.*

great contest, sent the constitutions of Clarendon to Alexander III. to be ratified. But the pope, unfriendly to the king's wishes, annulled those anti-clerical ordinances. When the archbishop found that he might depend on the papal support in an opposition to regal authority, he expressed the deepest sorrow for his concessions. He redoubled his austerities, as a punishment for his criminal compliance; and he refused to exercise any part of his ecclesiastical function, until he should receive absolution from the pope; a favour which was readily granted to him.

Incensed at the behaviour of Becket, the king summoned him to give an account of his administration of the office of chancellor, and to pay the balance due from the revenues of all the prelacies, abbeys, and baronies, which had been subject to his management during that time. This prosecution, which seems to have been more dictated by passion than by justice, or even by sound policy, threw Becket and all the clergy of England into the utmost confusion. Some bishops advised him to resign his see, on receiving an acquittal; others were of opinion that he ought to submit himself entirely to the king's mercy—for they were fully sensible that accounts of so much intricacy could not be readily produced, so as to satisfy a tribunal resolved to ruin and oppress him. But the primate had too much courage to yield: he determined to brave all his enemies, to trust to the sacredness of his character for protection, and to defy the utmost efforts of royal indignation, by involving his cause with that of God and the church. He therefore strictly prohibited his suffragans from assisting at any such trial, or giving their sanction to any sentence against him: he put himself and his see under the immediate protection of the vicegerent of Christ, and appealed to his holiness against any penalty which his iniquitous judges might think proper to inflict upon him. "The indignation "of a great monarch," added he, "with his sword, can "only kill the body; while that of the church, intrusted to

"the primate, can kill the soul, and throw the disobedi-"ent into infinite and eternal perdition[8]."

Appeals to Rome, even in spiritual causes, had been prohibited by the constitutions of Clarendon, and consequently were become criminal by law; but an appeal in a civil cause, such as the king's demand upon Becket, was altogether new and unprecedented, and tended to the subversion of the English government. Henry, therefore, being now furnished with a better pretence for his violence, would probably have pushed this affair to the utmost against the primate, had he not retired beyond sea, and found patrons and protectors in the pope and the king of France.

The violent prosecution carried on against Becket at home had a natural tendency to turn the public favour on his side, and to make men forget his former ingratitude towards the king, and his departure from all oaths and engagements, as well as the enormity of those ecclesiastical privileges of which he affected to be the champion: and political considerations conspired with sympathy to procure him countenance and support abroad. The king of France and the earl of Flanders, jealous of the rising greatness of Henry, were glad of an opportunity of embroiling his government. They pretended to pity extremely the condition of the persecuted archbishop; and the pope, whose interests were more immediately concerned in abetting his cause, honoured Becket with the highest marks of distinction. A residence was assigned to him in the abbey of Pontigny, where he lived for some years in great magnificence, partly by a pension out of the revenues of the abbey, and partly by the generosity of the French monarch[9].

The exiled primate filled Europe with exclamations against the violence he had suffered. He compared himself to Christ, who had been condemned by a lay tribunal, and who was crucified anew in the present oppressions under

8 M. Paris.—Hoved.—*Epist. S. Thom.* 9 *Epist. S. Thom.*

which his church laboured. But mere complaint did not sufficiently accord with the vehemence of Becket's temper. Having resigned his see into the hands of the pope, as a mark of submission, and received it again from the head of the church, with high encomiums on his piety and fortitude, he fulminated a sentence of excommunication against the king's chief ministers by name, as well as against every one who had favoured or obeyed the constitutions of Clarendon: he abrogated those profane laws, absolving all persons from the oaths which they had taken to observe them; and he suspended the spiritual thunder over Henry, only that he might avoid the blow by a timely repentance[10].

Henry, on the other hand, employed the temporal weapons still in his power. He suspended the payment of St. Peter's Pence, and made some advances towards an alliance with the emperor. But he at length became weary of contention, and earnestly wished for an accommodation, which, however, continued to be obstructed by mutual jealousy. When all differences seemed to be adjusted, the king offered to sign the treaty, with a salvo to his *royal dignity*—a reservation which so disgusted the primate, that the negotiation became fruitless. On another occasion, Becket, imitating Henry's example, offered to make his submissions with a salvo of the *honour of God* and the *liberties of the Church*—a proposal which, for a like reason, was offensive to the king, and rendered the treaty abortive. A third conference was broken off in the same manner. And even in a fourth, when all things were settled, and the primate expected to be introduced to the king, Henry refused to grant him the kiss of peace, under pretence that he had made a vow to the contrary. The want of this formality, insignificant as it may seem, prevented the conclusion of the treaty, it being regarded in those times as the only sure mark of forgiveness.

A. D. 1165.

A. D. 1168.

A. D. 1169.

10 M. Paris.—Hoved.—Fitz-Steph.

In one of these conferences, at which the French king was present, Henry said to that monarch, "There have "been many kings of England, some of greater, some of "less authority than myself: there have also been many "archbishops of Canterbury, holy and good men, and en- "titled to every kind of respect:—let Becket only act to- "wards me with the same submission which the greatest "of his predecessors paid to the least of mine, and there "shall be no controversy between us[11]."

Louis was so much struck with this state of the case, and with an offer which Henry made to submit his cause to the French clergy, that he could not forbear condemning Becket and withdrawing his friendship for a time. But their common animosity against Henry soon produced a revival of their former intimacy; and the primate renewed his threats and excommunications. All difficulties between the parties, however, were at last surmounted, and Becket was permitted to return on conditions both honourable and advantageous—a certain proof not only that Henry was alarmed at the interdict to which his dominions would have been subjected, if he had continued in disobedience to the church, but also that the thunder of the church must then have been truly formidable, since it could humble a prince of so haughty a spirit.

A. D. 1170.

This accommodation with Becket, however, did not procure Henry even that temporary tranquillity which he had hoped to reap from it. Instead of learning moderation in the school of adversity, the primate was only animated with a spirit of revenge. Elated by the victory which he had obtained over his sovereign, he set no bounds to his arrogance. On his arrival in England, where he went from town to town in a sort of triumphal cavalcade, he notified to the archbishop of York the sentence of suspension, and to the bishops of London and Salisbury that of excommu-

11 *Vit. S. Thom.* lib. ii.

nication, which, at his solicitations, the pope had pronounced against them, because they had assisted at the coronation of prince Henry, whom the king had associated in the royalty, during the absence of the primate, and when an interdict was ready to be laid upon his dominions—a precaution thought necessary to insure the succession of that prince. By this violent measure, Becket in effect declared war against the king himself; yet, in so doing, he appears to have been guided by policy as well as passion. Apprehensive that a prince of such profound sagacity might in the end prevail, he resolved to take all the advantage which his present victory gave him, and to disconcert the cautious measures of the king by the vehemence and vigour of his own conduct. Assured of support from Rome, he had little fear of dangers which his courage taught him to despise, and which, though followed by the most fatal consequences, would still gratify his thirst of glory, and reward his ambition with the crown of martyrdom.

The suspended and excommunicated prelates visited the king at Bayeux in Normandy, and complained to him of the violent proceedings of Becket; and Henry, sensible that his whole plan of operations was overturned, and the contest revived, which he had endeavoured by so many negotiations to appease, was thrown into the most violent agitation. "Will my servants," exclaimed he, "still leave me exposed to the insolence of this imperious and ungrateful "priest?"—These words seemed to call for vengeance; and four gentlemen of the king's household, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito, communicating their thoughts to each other, and swearing to revenge their sovereign's quarrel, secretly withdrew from court, and hastened to England. Henry, informed of some menacing expressions which they had thrown out, dispatched a messenger after them, charging them to attempt nothing against the person of the primate.

But these orders came too late to prevent their fatal purpose. Though they took different routes to avoid suspicion, they arrived nearly about the same time at Canterbury, where they found the primate in perfect security; and on his refusing, with his usual insolence and obstinacy, to take off the excommunication and suspension of
Dec. 29. the bishops, they murdered him in the cathedral, during the evening service[12].

Such was the tragical death of Thomas Becket—a prelate of the most lofty, intrepid, and inflexible spirit, who was able to cover from the world, and probably from himself, the efforts of pride and ambition, under the disguise of sanctity, and of zeal for the interests of Christ and his church. His death confirmed to the clergy those privileges which his opposition could not obtain. Though Henry had proposed to have him arrested, when informed of his renewed insolence, he no sooner heard of the murder, than he was filled with the utmost consternation. Interdicts and excommunications, weapons in themselves so terrible, would now, he foresaw, be armed with double force: in vain would he plead his innocence, and even his total ignorance of the fact; he was sufficiently guilty, if the church thought him so. These considerations gave him the deepest and most unaffected concern. He shut himself up from the light of the sun for three days, denying himself all manner of sustenance; and as soon as he recovered, in any degree, his tone of mind, he sent a solemn embassy to Rome,
A.D. 1171. maintaining his innocence, and offering to submit the whole affair to the decision of the holy see[13].

The pope, flattered by this unexpected condescension, forbore to proceed to extremities against Henry, particularly as he was sensible that he could reap greater advantages from moderation than from violence. The clergy, in the mean time, were not idle in magnifying the sanctity of the mur-

12 *Vit. S. Thom.* lib. iii.—M. Paris.—Gervas. *Chron.*
13 M. Paris.—Hoved.

dered primate. Other saints had borne testimony, by their sufferings, to the general doctrines of Christianity; but Becket had sacrificed his life for the power and privileges of the church. This peculiar merit challenged (not without a ready concurrence) a tribute of gratitude to his memory from the whole clerical body. Endless were the panegyrics on his virtues; and the miracles pretended to be wrought by his reliques were more numerous, more absurd, and more impudently attested, than those which ever filled the legend of any saint or martyr. His shrine not only restored dead men to life; it also restored cows, dogs, and horses. Presents were sent, and pilgrimages performed, from all parts of Christendom, in order to obtain his intercession with Heaven: and it was computed that, in one year, above a hundred thousand pilgrims arrived at Canterbury, and paid their devotions at his tomb[14].

As Henry found, however, that he was in no immediate danger from the thunder of the Vatican, he undertook the conquest of Ireland—an enterprise which he had long meditated, and for which he had obtained a bull from pope Adrian IV., but which had been deferred on account of his quarrels with the primate. Of that island something must here be said.

Ireland was probably first peopled from Britain, as Britain was from Gaul; and its first inhabitants were of Celtic origin. From the earliest accounts of history or tradition, the Irish had been buried in ignorance and barbarism; and as their country was never conquered or even invaded by the Romans, who communicated to the western world civilisation and slavery, they had remained almost in their primitive condition. The chieftains of the small principalities, into which the island was divided, exercised perpetual hostilities against each other; and the uncertain succession of the Irish princes was a continual source of do-

14 Gul. Neubrig.—Brompt.—Hoved.

mestic convulsion, the usual title of each petty sovereign to his principality being the murder of his predecessor. Courage and force, though exercised in the commission of injustice, were more honoured than pacific virtues; and the most simple arts of life were scarcely known to the rude natives of the island.

From this short account of the state of the country, you will not be surprised, my dear Philip, when I inform you, that earl Strongbow and other enterprising knights had great success with a very inconsiderable force, and that Henry, in a progress which he made through the island, had little other occupation than to receive the homage of his new subjects. He left most of the Irish chieftains or princes in possession of their ancient territories: he bestowed lands on some of his English adventurers;
A.D. 1172. and, after a stay of a few months, returned to Britain[15].

The pope's two legates, Albert and Theodine, to whom was committed the trial of Henry's conduct in regard to the death of Becket, had arrived in Normandy before his return, and had sent frequent letters to England, full of menacing expressions. The king hastened over to meet them; and was so fortunate as to conclude an accommodation with them on terms more easy than could have been expected. He cleared himself by oath of all concern in the murder of Becket. But as the passion which he had expressed on account of that prelate's conduct had probably been the cause of his violent death, he promised to serve three years against the infidels, either in Spain or Palestine, if the pope should require him; and he agreed to permit appeals to the holy see, in ecclesiastical causes, on surety being given that nothing should be attempted against the rights of his crown[16].

15 M. Paris.—Giraldi Cambrensis *Hibernia Expugnat.* lib. i.
16 M. Paris.—Hoved.

Henry seemed now to have reached the pinnacle of human grandeur and felicity. His dangerous controversy with the church was at an end, and he appeared to be equally happy in his domestic situation and his political government. But this tranquillity was of short duration. Prince Henry, at the instigation of Louis VII., his father-in-law, insisted that his father should resign to him either the kingdom of England or the duchy of Normandy: and the king's sons Geoffrey and Richard also leagued with the court of France, by the persuasions of their mother, queen Eleanor, whose jealousy, when in years, was as violent as her amorous passions in youth.

A.D. 1173.

Thus Europe saw, with astonishment, the best and most indulgent of parents obliged to maintain war against his wife and his sons; and, what was still more extraordinary, several princes not ashamed to support this unnatural rebellion!—Not only the French monarch, but William king of Scotland, the earl of Flanders, and some other princes, besides many barons, both English and Norman, espoused the quarrel of young Henry and his brothers[17].

In order to break this alarming confederacy, the king of England humbled himself so far as to supplicate the court of Rome. Though aware of the danger of the interference of ecclesiastical authority in temporal disputes, he applied to the pope to excommunicate his enemies, and thus reduce to obedience his undutiful children, whom he was unwilling to punish by the sword. The bulls required were issued by the pontiff; but, as they had not the desired effect, Henry was obliged to have recourse to arms; and he carried on war with success against the French, the Scots, and his rebellious barons in England and Normandy.

Meanwhile, sensible of his danger, and of the effects of superstition on the minds of the people, he went barefooted to Becket's tomb; prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint; remained in fasting and

A.D. 1174.

17 Gul. Neubrig.—Hoved.

prayer during a whole day; watched all night the holy reliques; and, assembling a chapter of the monks, put scourges into their hands, and presented his bare shoulders to the lashes which these incensed ecclesiastics not sparingly inflicted upon him!—The next morning he received absolution; and his generals obtained, on the

July 13.

same day, a great ctory over the Scots, which was regarded as a proof of his final reconciliation with the sainted primate and with Heaven [16].

The victory over the Scots was gained near Alnwick, where their king was made prisoner; and, the spirit of the English rebels being broken by this blow, the whole kingdom was restored to tranquillity. It was deemed impious longer to resist a prince who seemed to lie under the immediate protection of Heaven. The clergy exalted anew the merits and the powerful intercession of Becket; and Henry, instead of opposing their superstition, politically propagated an opinion so favourable to his interests. Victorious in all quarters, crowned with glory, and

A.D. 1175.

absolute master of his English dominions, he hastened to Normandy, where a peace was concluded with Louis, and an accommodation adjusted with his sons.

Having thus, contrary to all expectation, extricated himself from a situation in which his throne was exposed to the utmost danger, Henry occupied himself for several years in administering justice, enacting laws, and guarding against those inconveniences which either the past convulsions of the state, or the political institutions of that age, rendered unavoidable. The success which had attended him in his wars discouraged his neighbours from making any attempts against him, so that he was enabled to complete his internal regulations without disturbance from any quarter. Some of these regulations deserve particular notice.

As the clergy, by the constitutions of Clarendon, which

16 Benedict. Abb. de *Rebus Gestis Hen. II.*—Hoved.

Henry endeavoured still to maintain, were subjected to a trial by the civil magistrate, it seemed but just to afford them the protection of that power to which they owed obedience: he therefore enacted a law, that the murderers of a clergyman should be tried before the justiciary, in the presence of the bishop, or his official; and, besides the usual punishment for murder, should be subjected to a forfeiture of their estates, and a confiscation of their goods and chattels[19]. He also passed an equitable law, that the goods of a vassal should not be seised for the debt of his lord, unless the vassal was surety for the debt; and that, in cases of insolvency, the rents of vassals should be paid to the creditors of the lord, not to the lord himself[20].

The division of England into four circuits, and the appointment of itinerant judges to each, after the example of the commissaries of Louis VI. and the *missi* of Charlemagne, formed another important ordinance of the English monarch—a measure which had a direct tendency to curb the oppressions of the barons, and to protect the inferior gentry or small landholders, and the common people, in their property[21].

Not neglecting the defence of the realm, Henry published a famous decree, called an *Assise of Arms.* He required that every person possessed of a single knight's fee should have a coat of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance: and that the same accoutrements should be provided by every one, for whatever number of knight's fees he might hold. Every free layman, who had rents or goods to the value of sixteen marks, was to be armed in like manner: every one that had ten marks was obliged to have an iron gorget, a cap of iron, and a lance; and all burgesses were to have a cap of iron, a lance, and a coat thickly quilted with wool, tow, or cotton, called a *Wambais*[22]. A.D. 1181.

19 Gervas. *Chron.*—R. Dicet. 20 Benedict. Abb.
21 Hoved. *Annal.* 22 *Annal. Waverl.*—Bened. Abb.

While Henry was thus employed in providing for the happiness and security of his subjects, the king of France had fallen into a most abject superstition; and was induced, by a devotion more sincere than that of his powerful rival, to make a pilgrimage in 1179 to the tomb of Becket, in order to obtain his intercession for the recovery of Philip, his son and heir. Louis (as the sagacious Hume remarks, with no less ingenuity than pleasantry) probably thought himself entitled to the favour of that saint, on account of their ancient intimacy; and hoped that Becket, whom he had protected while on earth, would not, now that he was so highly advanced in heaven, forget his old friend and benefactor. The young prince was restored to health; and, as was supposed, through the intercession of Becket. But the king himself, soon after his return, was struck with an apoplexy, which deprived him of his judgement; and Philip II., afterwards surnamed Augustus, took upon him the administration, though he was only in his fifteenth year. His father's death, which happened in the following
Sept. 18, 1180. year, opened his way to the throne; and he proved the ablest and greatest monarch that had governed France since the reign of Charle-magne. The superior age and experience of Henry, however, while they moderated his ambition, gave him such an ascendant over this prince, that no dangerous rivalry, for some time, arose between them. The English monarch, instead of taking advantage of Philip's youth, employed his good offices in composing the quarrels which arose in the royal family of France: and he was successful in mediating an accommodation between the king, his mother, and uncles. But these services were ill requited by Philip, who, when he came to man's estate, encouraged Henry's sons in their ungrateful and undutiful behaviour towards their father.

The quarrels between the king of England and his family, however, were in some measure quieted by the death of his two sons, young Henry and his brother Geoffrey; and

the rivalry between the elder Henry and Philip seemed, for a time, to give place to the general passion for the relief of the Holy Land. Both assumed the cross, and imposed a tax, amounting to the tenth of all moveables, on such of their subjects as remained at home [23]. A.D. 1188.

Before this great enterprise, however, could be carried into execution, some obstacles were to be surmounted. Philip, still jealous of Henry's greatness, entered into a private confederacy with prince Richard, now heir apparent to the English crown; and, by working on his ambitious and impatient temper, persuaded him to seek present power and independence at the expense of filial duty, and of the grandeur of that monarchy which he was one day to inherit. The king of England was therefore obliged, at an advanced age, to defend his dominions by arms, and to enter on a war with France, and with his eldest surviving son—a prince of great valour A. D. 1189. and popularity, who had seduced the chief barons of Poictou, Guienne, Anjou, and Normandy. Henry, as might be expected, was unsuccessful—a misfortune which so much subdued his spirit, that he concluded a treaty on very disadvantageous terms. He agreed that Richard should receive the homage and fealty of all his subjects, and that all his associates should be pardoned: and he engaged to pay the king of France a compensation for the charges of the war [24].

But the mortification which Henry, who had been accustomed to give law to his enemies, received from these humiliating conditions, was light in comparison of what he experienced from another cause. When he demanded a list of the persons to whom he was to grant an indemnity for confederating with Richard, he was astonished to find at the head of them the name of his son John, who had always shared his confidence, and whose influence over the king had often excited the jealousy of Richard. Over-

23 Benedict. Abb.—Hoved.

24 M. Paris.—Bened. Abb.

loaded with cares and sorrows, and robbed of his last domestic comforts, this unhappy father broke out into expressions of the utmost despair: he cursed the day of his birth; and bestowed on his undutiful and ungrateful children a malediction which he could never be brought to retract [25]. The more his heart was disposed to friendship and affection, the more he resented the barbarous return which his four sons had successively made to his parental care; and this fatal discovery, by depriving him of all that made life desirable, quite broke his spirit, and threw him into a fever, of which he soon after expired, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, at the castle of Chinon, in Anjou.

The character of Henry, both in public and private life, was almost without a blemish; and his natural endowments were equal to his moral qualities. He seems to have possessed every mental and personal accomplishment that could render him either estimable or amiable. He was of a middle stature, strong and well proportioned; his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and ever at command. He loved peace, but was courageous and skilful in war; was provident without excessive caution, severe in the execution of justice without inhumanity, and temperate without austerity. He is said to have been of a very amorous complexion, and historians mention two of his natural sons by Rosamond, the fair daughter of lord Clifford—namely, William Long-sword, and Geoffrey, archbishop of York. The other circumstances of the story commonly told of that lady seem to be fabulous, though adopted by many historical writers.

Like most of his predecessors of the Norman line, Henry spent more of his time on the continent than in England. He was surrounded by the English nobility and gentry when abroad; and the French nobles and gentry

25 Hoved.—*Annal.*

attended him when he returned to this island. All foreign improvements, therefore, in literature and politeness, in laws and arts, seem to have been then transplanted into England: and the spirit of liberty, which continued to animate the breasts of the native English, communicated itself to the Anglo-Norman barons, and rendered them not only more desirous of independence for themselves, but also more willing to indulge it to the people, whom they had at first affected to despise.

The effects of this secret revolution in the sentiments of men we shall afterwards have occasion to trace. At present I must return to the affairs of Germany; remarking by the way, that Henry II. left only two legitimate sons, Richard, who succeeded him, and John, who was denominated Lack-Land, because he inherited no territory, though his father, at one time, had intended to leave him a large share of his extensive dominions.

LETTER XXX.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, under Frederic I., with some Account of the third Crusade.

I HAVE already stated, my dear Philip, that Frederic Barbarossa, a brave and able prince, was unanimously chosen emperor on the death of Conrad III. His elevation seemed to give general satisfaction to Europe; but he was soon involved in troubles, which required all his courage and capacity to surmount, and which it would be tedious circumstantially to relate. I shall therefore only observe, that, after having settled the affairs of Germany, by restoring Bavaria to Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, he marched into Italy, in order to compose the disturbances of that country, and

A.D. 1152.

A.D. 1158.

to be crowned by the pope, in imitation of his predecessors.

Adrian IV., who then filled St. Peter's chair, was an Englishman, and a great example of what may be done by personal merit and good fortune. The son of a mendicant, and long a mendicant himself, strolling from country to country, he was received as a servant to the canons of St. Rufus in Provence. He was afterwards admitted a monk, was raised to the rank of abbot and general of the order, and at length to the pontificate. He was inclined to crown a vassal, but afraid of giving himself a master: he therefore insisted upon the Roman ceremonial, which required, that the emperor should prostrate himself before the pope, kiss his feet, hold his stirrup, and lead the holy father's white palfrey by the bridle the distance of nine Roman paces.

Frederic looked upon the whole ceremony as an insult, and refused to submit to it; but the officers of the Roman chancery, who kept a register of every thing of this kind, assured him that his predecessors had always complied with these forms. The ceremony of kissing the pope's feet, which he knew to be the established custom, did not so keenly wound the emperor's pride as that of holding the bridle and the stirrup, which he considered as an innovation: and indeed it does not appear that any emperor, except Lothaire II., had complied with this part of the formality. Frederic, however, at length submitted to these affronts, as empty marks of Christian humility, though the court of Rome viewed them as proofs of real subjection[1].

But the emperor's difficulties were not yet over. The citizens of Rome sent him a deputation, demanding the restoration of their ancient form of government, and offering to stipulate with him for the imperial dignity. "Charle-

1 Bunau, *Hist. Fred. I.*—Murat. *Antiq. Ital.*

"magne and Otho conquered you by their valour," replied Frederic, "and I am your master by right of succession: it is my business to prescribe laws, and yours "to receive them." With these words he dismissed the deputies, and was inaugurated without the walls of the city by the pope, who put the sceptre in his hand, and the crown upon his head.

The nature of the imperial dignity was then so little understood, and the pretensions were so contradictory, that, on the one hand, the Roman citizens mutinied, and a great deal of blood was shed, because the pope had crowned the emperor without the consent of the senate and the people; and, on the other hand, Adrian repeatedly declared, that he had conferred the *benefice* of the Roman empire on Frederic I., "*beneficium imperii* "*Romani*" (the word *beneficium* literally signifying a fief, though his holiness explained it otherwise). Adrian also exhibited publicly in Rome a picture of the emperor Lothaire on his knees before pope Innocent II., holding both his hands joined between those of the pontiff, which was the distinguishing mark of vassalage; and on the picture was this inscription: A.D. 1156.

Rex venit ante fores, jurans prius urbis honores:
Post homo fit papæ, sumit quo dante coronam (2).

"Before the gates the king appears;
"Rome's honours to maintain he swears;
"Then to the pope sinks lowly down,
"Who grants him the imperial crown."

Frederic was at Besançon, when he received information of Adrian's insolence; and when he expressed his displeasure at it, a cardinal then present said, "If he "does not hold the empire of the pope, of whom does "he hold it?" Enraged at this impertinent speech, Otho,

2 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.—Bunau, *Hist. Fred.*

count Palatine, would have pierced the author of it with the sword which he wore as marshal of the empire, had not Frederic prevented him. The cardinal immediately fled, and the pope entered into a treaty. The Germans then made use of no argument but force, and the court of Rome sheltered itself under the ambiguity of its expressions. Adrian declared, that *benefice*, according to his idea, signified a *favour*, not a *fief*; and he promised to put out of the way the painting of the consecration of Lothaire.

A few observations will not here be improper. Adrian IV., besieged by William king of Sicily in Benevento, gave up to him several ecclesiastical pretensions. He consented that Sicily should never have any legate, nor be subject to any appeal to the see of Rome, except with the king's permission. Since that time, the kings of Sicily, though the only princes who are vassals of the pope, are in a manner popes in their own island. The Roman pontiffs, thus at once adored and abused, somewhat resembled, to borrow a remark from Voltaire, the idols which the Indians scourge to obtain favours from them.

Adrian, however, fully revenged himself upon other princes who required his occasional aid. He wrote in the following manner to Henry II. of England. "There is "no doubt, and you acknowledge it, that Ireland, and all "the islands which have received the faith, appertain to "the Roman church; but, if you wish to take possession "of that island, in order to banish vice from it, to enforce "the observance of the Christian doctrines, and with an "intent of paying the yearly tribute of St. Peter's penny "for every house, we with pleasure grant you our permission to conquer it[3]." Thus an English beggar, who had become bishop of Rome, bestowed Ireland, by his sole authority, upon an English king, who was

3 M. Paris.—Girald. Cambr.

desirous of gaining possession of that country, and who had power to accomplish the ambitious scheme.

The intrepid activity of Frederic Barbarossa had not only to subdue the pope, who disputed the empire; Rome, which refused to acknowledge a master; and many other cities of Italy, that asserted their independence: he had, at the same time, the Bohemians, who had mutinied against him, to humble[4]; and also the Poles, with whom he was at war. Yet all this he effected. He was successful in Poland: he quelled the tumults in Bohemia: he secured the fidelity of the German princes, by rendering himself formidable to foreign nations; and then hastened to Italy, where hopes of independence had arisen, in consequence of his troubles and perplexities. In that country, he found great confusion, arising not so much from the efforts of the several cities to recover their freedom, as from that party rage which constantly prevailed at the election of a pope.

A.D. 1158.

On the death of Adrian, two opposite factions tumultuously elected two persons, known by the names of Victor IV. and Alexander III. The emperor's allies necessarily acknowledged the pope chosen by him; and those princes, who were jealous of the emperor, acknowledged the other. What was the shame and scandal of Rome, therefore, became the signal of division over all Europe. Victor, Frederic's pope, had Germany, Bohemia, and one half of Italy on his side. The other kingdoms and states submitted to Alexander III., in honour of whom the Milanese, who were avowed enemies to the emperor,

A.D. 1159.

4 It is not improper, in this place, to state briefly the origin and progress of the kingdom erected in Bohemia by the Sarmatians or Sclavonians. For many centuries the country was governed by dukes, whom Charle-magne rendered tributary to the empire. At length, in 1086, duke Ladislaus was permitted, by the imperial diet, to assume the regal title. The country was long harassed by intestine divisions, of which the emperors took advantage for the establishment of their feudal superiority over the kings. Of nine princes who governed from the year above-mentioned to the time of Frederic Barbarossa, two died by the hand of violence, and two were deposed.

built the city of Alexandria. In vain did Frederic's party endeavour to have it called Cæsaria; the pope's name prevailed: and it was afterwards called, out of derision, *Alexandria della Paglia*, or *Alexandria built of straw*, on account of the meanness of its buildings[5].

Happy had it been for Europe if that age had produced no disputes attended with more fatal consequences; but unfortunately this was not the case. Milan, for maintaining its independence, was, by the emperor's
A. D. 1162. orders, razed to the foundations, and salt was strewed upon its ruins; Brescia and Placentia were dismantled by the conqueror; and the other cities which had aimed at independence were deprived of their privileges.

Pope Alexander, who had excited these revolts, and had been obliged to take refuge in France, returned to Rome after the death of his rival; and the civil war was renewed. The emperor caused another pope to be elected,
A. D. 1164. under the appellation of Paschal III., on whose decease, a new pontiff was nominated by Frederic, under the title of Calixtus III. Meanwhile Alexander was not intimidated. He solemnly excommunicated the
A. D. 1168. emperor; and the flames of civil discord continued to spread. The chief cities of Italy, supported by the Greek emperor and the king of Sicily, entered into an association for the defence of their liberties; and the pope, at length, proved stronger by negotiating than the emperor by fighting. The imperialists, worn out by fatigue and disease, were routed by the confederates; and
A. D. 1176. Frederic himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner. About the same time his eldest son was defeated at sea by the Venetians, and fell into the hands of the enemy. Alexander, in honour of this victory, sailed into the Adriatic Sea, or Gulph of Venice, accompanied by the whole senate; and, after having pronounced many

5 Murat. *Antiq. Ital.*

benedictions on that element, threw into it a ring as a mark of his gratitude and affection. Hence originated that ceremony which is annually performed by the Venetians, under the notion of espousing the Adriatic.

These misfortunes disposed the emperor to an accommodation with the pope; but his pride would not permit him to make any humiliating advances. He therefore exerted himself with so much vigour in repairing his losses, that he was soon enabled to risque another battle, in which his enemies were worsted; and being no less a politician than a general, he seised this fortunate moment to signify his desire of peace to Alexander, who received the proposal with great joy. Venice had the honour of being the place of reconciliation. The emperor, the pope, and a number of princes and cardinals, repaired to that city, then mistress of the sea, and one of the wonders of the world. There Frederic put an end to his bloody dispute with the see of Rome, by acknowledging the pope, kissing his feet, and holding his stirrup while he mounted his mule[6]. A.D. 1177.

This reconciliation was attended with the submission of all the towns in Italy, which had entered into an association for their mutual defence. They obtained a general pardon, and were left at liberty to use their own laws and forms of government, but were obliged to take the oath of allegiance to the emperor, as their superior lord.

Calixtus, the anti-pope, finding himself abandoned by the emperor, in consequence of that treaty, made his submissions to Alexander, who, to prevent future schisms, called a general council, in which it was decreed, that no pope should be deemed duly elected without having the votes of two thirds of the college of cardinals in his favour[7]. A.D. 1179.

The affairs of Italy being thus settled, the emperor re-

6 Bunau, *Hist. Fred.*

7 Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. iii.

turned to Germany, where Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, had raised fresh troubles. He was a proud, haughty, and turbulent prince, like most of his predecessors, and not only oppressed his own subjects, but committed violences against all his neighbours. His natural pride was not diminished by his alliance with the king of England, whose daughter he had married. Glad of an opportunity of being revenged upon Henry, who had abandoned him in his Italian expedition, Frederic convoked a diet at Goslar, where the duke was put to the ban of the empire; and, after a variety of struggles, the sentence was put in execution. He was divested of all his dominions, which were bestowed upon different vassals of the empire.

A.D. 1180.

Sensible of his folly when too late, the degraded duke threw himself at the emperor's feet, and begged with great humility that some of his territories might be restored. Frederic, touched with his unfortunate condition, referred him to a diet of the empire at Erfort. There Henry endeavoured to acquit himself of the crimes laid to his charge. But as it was impracticable immediately to withdraw his fiefs from the present possessors, the emperor advised him to reside in England, until the princes who had shared his dominions could be persuaded to relinquish them; and he promised that, in the mean time, no attempts should be made upon the territories of Brunswic or Lunenburg, which he would protect in behalf of Henry's children. In compliance with this advice, the duke retired to England, where he was hospitably entertained by his father-in-law, Henry II.; and there his wife bore him a fourth son, the ancestor of the present house of Brunswic, and consequently of the family now reigning in Great Britain[8].

A.D. 1181.

While tranquillity was, in this manner, happily restored

8 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome i.

to Italy and Germany, the Oriental Christians were in the utmost distress. The celebrated Saladin, or Salaheddin, born in the small country of the Curdes (a nation always warlike, and always free), having fixed himself, by his bravery and conduct, on the throne of Egypt, began to extend his conquests over the East; and finding the settlements of the Christians in Palestine a great obstacle to the progress of his arms, he bent the whole force of his policy and valour to subdue that small and barren but important territory. Taking advantage of the dissensions which prevailed among the champions of the Cross, and having secretly gained the count of Tripoli, who commanded their armies, he invaded Palestine with a mighty force; and, aided by the treachery of that count, gained at Tiberias a complete victory over them, which utterly broke the power of the already languishing kingdom of Jerusalem. The holy city itself fell into his hands, after a feeble resistance: the kingdom of Antioch also was almost entirely subdued by his arms; and, except some maritime towns, nothing of importance remained of those boasted conquests, which, near a century before, had cost the efforts of all Europe to acquire[9]. A.D. 1187.

Alarmed at this intelligence, pope Clement III. ordered a crusade to be preached through all the countries in Christendom. Europe was filled with grief and astonishment at the progress of the infidels in Asia. To give a check to it seemed the common cause of Christians. Frederic Barbarossa, who was at that time employed in making regulations for the preservation of the peace and good order of Germany, assembled a diet at Mentz, in order to deliberate with the states of the empire on this subject. He took the cross; and his example was followed by his son Frederic, and the most distinguished of the German nobles, ecclesiastics as well as laymen. The rendezvous was appointed at Ratisbon; and, to pre- A.D. 1188.

9 Maimbourg, *Hist. des Croisades.*

vent the inconvenience of too great a multitude, the emperor decreed, that no person should take the cross who could not afford to expend three marks of silver. But notwithstanding that regulation, wisely calculated to prevent those necessities which had ruined the former armies, so great was the zeal of the Germans, that adventurers assembled to the number of one hundred and fifty thousand fighting men, well armed, and provided with necessaries for the expedition[10].

Before his departure, Frederic made a progress through the principal cities of Germany, accompanied by his son Henry, to whom he intended to commit the government of the empire; and that he might omit nothing necessary to the preservation of peace and harmony during his absence, he endeavoured so to regulate the succession to his dominions that none of his children should have cause to complain, or any pretext to disturb the public tranquillity. He then marched at the head of thirty thousand men, by the way of Vienna, to Presburg, where he was joined by the rest of his army. He thence proceeded through Hungary, into the territories of the Greek emperor, Isaac Angelus, who, notwithstanding his professions of friendship, had been detached from the interest of Frederic by Saladin's promises and insinuations, and took all opportunities of harassing the Germans in their march. Incensed at this perfidy, Frederic laid the country under contribution; defeated a body of Greeks that attacked him by surprise; and compelled Isaac to sue for peace. He wintered at Adrianople; crossed the Hellespont in the spring; defeated the infidels in several battles; pillaged the city of Iconium, and crossed Mount Taurus. All Asia was filled with the terror of his arms. He seemed to be among the soldiers of the cross what Saladin was among the Turks —an able politician, and a good general, tried by fortune. The Oriental Christians therefore flattered themselves with

A.D. 1189.

A.D. 1190.

10 Maimbourg, *Hist. des Croisades*.—Bunau.

certain relief from his assistance. But their hopes were suddenly blasted. This great prince, who was an expert swimmer, ventured to bathe in the cold river Cydnus, in order to refresh himself after fatigue in a sultry climate, perhaps in emulation of the Macedonian conqueror; and he instantly contracted a disorder, which at once put an end to his life and his bold enterprise [11]. June 10.

Thus unfortunately perished Frederic I., in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-ninth of his reign—a prince of a firm spirit and strong talents, who had the good of his country always at heart, and who supported the dignity of the empire with great courage and reputation. He was succeeded on the imperial throne by his son Henry VI. surnamed the Severe.—But, before I enter on the reign of this prince, I must carry forward the history of the third crusade, continued by the kings of France and England.

11 Maimbourg.—Bunau.

LETTER XXXI.

Of the Affairs of France and England, from the Death of Henry II. to the Grant of the Great Charter by King John, with a farther Account of the third Crusade.

THE death of Henry II. was an event esteemed equally fortunate by his son Richard, and by Philip Augustus, king of France. Philip had lost a dangerous and implacable enemy, and Richard acquired that crown which he had long wished to possess. Both seemed to consider the recovery of the Holy Land as the sole purpose of their government; yet neither was so much impelled to that pious undertaking by superstition, as by the love of military glory. The king of England, A. D. 1189.

in particular, carried so little appearance of sanctity in his conduct, that, when advised by a zealous preacher of the crusade (who from that merit had acquired the privilege of speaking the boldest truths) to disengage himself from his pride, avarice, and voluptuousness, which the priest affectedly called the king's favourite daughters, Richard promptly replied, "You counsel well!—and I "hereby dispose of the first to the Templars, of the second to the Benedictines, and of the third to my bishops[1]."

The reiterated calamities attending the former crusades taught the kings of France and England the necessity of trying another route to the holy land. They determined to conduct their armies thither by sea; to carry provisions with them; and, by means of their naval power, to maintain an open communication with their own states, and with all the western parts of Europe. The first place of rendezvous was the plain of Vezelay, where Philip and Richard found their armies amount to one hundred thousand men. They renewed their promises of mutual friendship; pledged their faith not to invade each other's dominions during the crusade, and, exchanging the oaths of all their barons and prelates to the same effect, they separated. Philip took the road to Genoa; Richard directed his course to Marseilles; both with a view of meeting their fleets, which were severally appointed to assemble in those harbours[2]. They put to sea together; and both, nearly about the same time, were obliged by stress of weather to take shelter in Messina, where they were detained during the whole winter. This event laid the foundation of animosities between them, which were never afterwards entirely removed, and proved ultimately fatal to their enterprise.

A. D. 1190.

But before I proceed to that subject, a few words relative to the characters and circumstances of the two princes

1 M. Westminst. 2 G. Vinis. *Iter. Hierosol.* lib. ii.

will be necessary. Philip and Richard, though professed friends, were, by the situation and extent of their dominions, rivals in power; by their age and inclinations, competitors for glory: and these causes of emulation, which might have stimulated them to martial efforts, had they been acting in the field against the common enemy, soon excited quarrels, during their present leisure, between monarchs of such fiery tempers. Equally haughty, ambitious, intrepid, and inflexible, they were irritated at the least appearance of injury, and did not endeavour, by mutual condescensions, to efface those occasions of complaint which arose between them. Other sources of discord were added to the natural rivalry of their characters.

William II., king of Naples and Sicily, had married Joan, sister to Richard; and that prince, dying without issue, had bequeathed his dominions to his paternal sister Constantia, the only legitimate surviving offspring of Roger the first king of Sicily of the race of Guiscard, the Norman hero. The emperor Henry VI. had married this princess, in expectation of that rich inheritance; but Tancred her natural brother, by his interest among the Sicilian nobles, had gained possession of the throne. The approach of the crusards gave him apprehensions for his unstable government: and he was uncertain whether he had most reason to dread the presence of the French or English monarch. Philip was engaged in strict alliance with the emperor, Tancred's competitor; Richard was disgusted at his rigour towards the queen-dowager, whom he confined in Palermo, because she had opposed his succession to the crown. Sensible, therefore, of the delicacy of his stuation, Tancred resolved to pay his court to both these princes; and he was not unsuccessful in his endeavours. He persuaded Philip, that it would be highly improper to interrupt the expedition against the infidels by any attack upon a Christian prince: he restored queen Joan to her liberty, and even found means to form an al-

liance with her brother. But, before this friendship was cemented, Richard, jealous both of Tancred and the inhabitants of Messina, had taken up his quarters in the suburbs, and possessed himself of a small fort which commanded the harbour. The citizens took umbrage. Mutual insults and injuries passed between them and the English soldiers. Philip, who had quartered his troops in the town, endeavoured to accommodate the quarrel, and held a conference with Richard for that purpose.

While the two kings, who met in the open fields, were engaged in discourse on this subject, a body of the Sicilians seemed to be drawing towards them. Richard, always ardent and impatient, pushed forward, in order to learn the cause of that extaordinary movement; and the English adventurers, insolent from their power, and inflamed by former animosities, wanting only a pretence to attack the Messinesse, chased them from the field, drove them into the town, and entered with them at the gates. The king employed his authority to restrain them from pillaging or massacring the defenceless inhabitants; but he gave orders that the standard of England, in token of his victory, should be erected on the walls. Philip, who considered the city of Messina as his quarters, exclaimed against the arrogance of the English monarch, and ordered some of his men to pull down the standard. But Richard informed him by a messenger, that although he would willingly himself remove that ground of offence, he would not permit it to be done by others; and if the French king attempted such an insult on his dignity, he should not succeed but by the utmost effusion of blood. Philip, satisfied with this species of haughty condescension, recalled his orders, and the difference was seemingly accommodated; but the seeds of rancour and jealousy still remained in the breasts of the two monarchs [3].

After leaving Sicily, the English fleet was assailed by a

3 Bened. Abb.—M. Paris.—G. Vinis.

furious tempest. It was driven on the coast of Cyprus, and some of the vessels were wrecked. A.D. 1191. Isaac Comnenus, despot of Cyprus, who had assumed the magnificent title of emperor, pillaged the ships that were stranded, and threw the seamen and passengers into prison. But Richard, who arrived soon after, took ample vengeance on him for the injury. He disembarked his troops; defeated the tyrant, who opposed his landing; entered Limisso by storm; obtained a second victory; obliged Isaac to surrender at discretion; established governors over the island; and afterwards conferred it as a sovereignty upon Guy de Lusignan, the expelled king of Jerusalem. Thrown into prison, and loaded with irons, the Greek prince complained of the little respect with which he was treated. Richard ordered silver fetters to be made for him; and this phantom of an emperor, pleased with the distinction, expressed a sense of the generosity of his conqueror[4]!

Before the two kings arrived in Asia, Ptolemais, or Acra, had long been besieged by a numerous Christian army, and defended by the utmost efforts of Saladin. Of the German crusards, so many had retired from the imperial ensigns, and such a number had fallen by pestilence and famine, that only a very small force had joined the besiegers of Acra, whose zeal began sensibly to decline. But the appearance of Philip and Richard inspired them with new life; and the emulation between the rival kings and rival nations produced extraordinary acts of valour. Richard especially, animated by a courage more precipitate than that of Philip, and more agreeable to the romantic spirit of the age, drew the attention of all the religious and military world, and acquired a great and splendid reputation. Ptolemais was taken. The garrison, reduced to extremity, surrendered the place; and the governor engaged that Saladin, besides paying a large sum as a ransom,

4 Bened. Abb.—M. Paris.

should release two thousand five hundred Christian prisoners, and restore the wood of the true cross [5].

Thus was this famous siege, which had so long engaged the attention of all Europe and Asia, brought to the desired close, after the loss of three hundred thousand men, exclusive of persons of superior rank; six archbishops, twelve bishops, forty earls, and five hundred barons. But the French monarch, instead of pursuing the hopes of farther conquest, and redeeming the holy city from slavery, being disgusted with the ascendant assumed and acquired by the king of England, and having views of many advantages which he might reap by his presence in Europe, declared his resolution of returning to France; and he pleaded his ill state of health as an excuse for his desertion of the common cause. He left however to Richard ten thousand of his men, under the command of the duke of Burgundy, and he renewed his oath not to commit hostilities against that prince's territories during his absence. But no sooner did he reach Italy than he applied to pope Celestine III. for a dispensation from his vow; and, though that request was not granted, he still proceeded, but after a more concealed manner, in his unjust projects. He seduced prince John, king Richard's brother, from his allegiance, and did every thing possible to blacken the character of that monarch himself, representing him as privy to the murder of the marquis de Montferrat, who had been taken off by an Asiatic chief, called *The old Man of the Mountain*, the prince of the *Assassins*—a word which has found its way into most European languages, from the practice of these bold and determined ruffians, against whom no precaution was sufficient to guard any man, however powerful [6].

But Richard's heroic actions in Palestine formed the best

5 Benedict. Abb.—Saladin refused to ratify the treaty; and the Saracen prisoners to the number of 2700, were inhumanly butchered. *Vinisauf*, lib. iv.

6 Walt. Hemingf.—Brompt.—Vinis.

apology for his conduct. The Christian adventurers, under his command, resolved to attempt the siege of Ascalon, in order to prepare the way for that of Jerusalem; and they marched along the sea-coast with that intention. Saladin took measures to obstruct their passage; and on this occasion was fought one of the greatest battles of that age, and the most celebrated for the military genius of the commanders, for the number and valour of the troops, and for the variety of events which attended it. The right and left wings of the Christian army were broken in the beginning of the day, and in danger of being totally defeated, when Richard, who commanded the centre, and led on the main body, restored the battle. He attacked the enemy with admirable intrepidity and presence of mind; performed the part of a consummate general and gallant soldier; and not only gave the two wings leisure to recover from their confusion, but obtained a complete victory over the Saracens, forty thousand of whom are said to have been slain in the field [7]. Ascalon soon after fell into the hands of the Christians: other sieges were carried on with success; and Richard was even able to advance within sight of Jerusalem, the great object of his hopes and fears, when he had the mortification to find, that he must abandon all thoughts of immediate success, and put a stop to the career of victory.

A.D. 1192.

Animated with an enthusiastic ardour for these holy wars, the champions of the cross, at first, laid aside all regard to safety or interest in the prosecution of their pious purpose; and, trusting to the immediate assistance of Heaven, set nothing before their eyes but fame and victory in this world, and a crown of glory in the next. But long absence from home, fatigue, disease, famine, and the varieties of fortune which naturally attend war, had gradually abated that fury which nothing was able instantly to allay

7 G. Vinis. lib. iv.

or withstand. Every leader, except the king of England, expressed a desire of speedily returning to Europe; so that there appeared an absolute necessity of abandoning, for the present, all hopes of farther conquest, and of securing the acquisitions of the adventurers by an accommodation with Saladin. Richard therefore concluded a truce with that monarch; stipulating that Ptolemais, Joppa, and other sea-port towns of Palestine, should remain in the hands of the Christians, and that every one of that religion should have liberty to perform his pilgrimage to Jerusalem unmolested[8]. This truce was concluded for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours, a magical number, suggested by a superstition well suited to the object of the war.

A. D. 1193. Saladin died at Damascus, soon after he had concluded the truce with the crusards. He was a prince of great generosity and valour; and it is truly memorable, that, during his fatal illness, he ordered his winding sheet to be carried as a standard through every street of the city, while a crier went before the person who bore that ensign of mortality, and proclaimed with a loud voice, "This is all that remains to the mighty Saladin, the conqueror of the East!" His last will is also remarkable. He ordered alms to be distributed among the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan, intending by this bequest to intimate, that all men are brethren, and that, when we would assist them, we ought not to inquire what they believe, but what they feel—an admirable lesson to Christians, though from an infidel. But the advantage of science, of moderation, and humanity, seemed at that time to be on the side of the Saracens.

After the truce Richard had no farther business in Palestine; and the intelligence which he received of the intrigues of his brother John and the king of France made him sensible that his presence was necessary in Europe. Not think-

8 W. Hemingf. lib. ii.—G, Vinis. lib. vi.

ing it safe to pass through Philip's dominions, he sailed to the Adriatic; and, being shipwrecked near Aquileia, he assumed the habit of a pilgrim, with an intention of taking his journey secretly through Germany. But his liberality and expenses betrayed him. He was arrested and thrown into prison by Leopold, duke of Austria, whom he had offended at the siege of Ptolemais, and who sold him to the emperor Henry VI., who had taken offence at Richard's alliance with Tancred, king of Sicily, and was glad to have him in his power[9]. Thus the gallant king of England, who had filled the world with his renown, found himself, during the most critical state of his affairs, confined to a dungeon, in the heart of Germany, loaded with irons, and entirely at the mercy of his enemy, the basest and most sordid of mankind[10].

While the high spirit of Richard suffered every insult and indignity in Germany, the king of France employed force, intrigue, and negotiation, against the dominions and the person of his unfortunate rival. He made large offers to the emperor, if he would deliver into his hands the

9 Gul. Neubr.—M. Paris.

10 *Chron.* T. Wykes.—The vindictive enemies of Richard, if we believe the literary history of the times, carefully concealed not only the place of his confinement, but even the circumstance of his captivity; and both might have remained unknown but for the grateful attachment of a Provençal bard, or minstrel, named Blondel, who had shared that prince's friendship, and experienced his bounty. Having travelled over the European continent to learn the history of his beloved patron, who was a poet, as well as a hero, Blondel accidentally gained intelligence of a certain castle in Germany, where a prisoner of distinction was confined, and guarded with great vigilance. Persuaded, by a secret impulse, that this prisoner was the king of England, the minstrel repaired to the place. But the gates of the castle were shut against him, and he could obtain no information relative to the name or quality of the unhappy person whom it secured. In this extremity, he thought of an expedient for making the desired discovery. He chanted, with a loud voice, some verses of a song, which had been composed partly by himself, partly by Richard; and, to his unspeakable joy, on making a pause, he heard it re-echoed and continued by the royal captive. To this discovery the English monarch is said to have eventually owed his release. *Histoire des Troubadours.*

royal prisoner: he formed an alliance by marriage with Denmark, desiring that the ancient Danish claim to the crown of England might be transferred to him; he concluded a treaty with prince John, who is said to have done homage to him for the English crown; and he invaded Normandy, while the traitor John attempted to make himself master of England[11].

Richard, being produced before a diet of the empire, made such an impression on the German princes, by his spirit and eloquence, that they exclaimed loudly against the conduct of the emperor. The pope also threatened him with excommunication; and although Henry had listened to the proposals of the king of France and prince John, he found that it would be impracticable for him to execute his and their base purposes, or to detain the king of England longer in captivity. He therefore concluded a treaty with Richard for his ransom, and agreed to restore him to his freedom for one hundred and fifty thousand marks of silver[12], about three hundred thousand pounds of our present money; an enormous sum in those days.

As soon as Philip heard of Richard's release, he wrote to his confederate John in these emphatical words;
A. D. 1194. "Take care of yourself! the devil is let loose." How different on this occasion were the sentiments of the English!—Their joy was extreme on the appearance of their king, who had acquired so much glory, and spread the reputation of their name to the farthest East. After renewing the ceremony of his coronation, amid the acclamations of all ranks of people, and reducing the fortresses which still remained in the hands of his brother's adherents, Richard passed over with an army into Normandy, eager to make war upon Philip, and to revenge himself for the injuries he had sustained from that monarch[13].

11 M. Paris.—W. Hemingf.—Hoved.

12 Rym. Fœdera, vol. i.

13 Hoved. *Annal.*

When we consider two such powerful and warlike monarchs, inflamed with personal animosity, enraged by mutual injuries, excited by rivalry, impelled by opposite interests, and instigated by the pride and violence of their own tempers, our curiosity is naturally raised, and we expect an obstinate and furious war, distinguished by the greatest events, and concluded by some remarkable catastrophe. We find ourselves, however, entirely disappointed; the reduction of a castle, the surprisal of a straggling party, a rencounter of horse, resembling more a rout than a battle, comprehend the whole of the exploits on both sides; a certain proof, as a great historian observes, of the weakness of princes in that age, and of the little authority which they possessed over their refractory vassals[14].

During this war, which continued, with short intervals, till Richard's death, prince John deserted Philip, threw himself at his brother's feet, craved pardon for his offences, and was received into favour, at the intercession of his mother. "I forgive him with all my heart," said the king; "and hope I shall as easily forget his offences, as he will "my pardon[15]."

Peace was ready to be concluded between England and France, when Richard was unfortunately slain before an inconsiderable castle which he had invested. The story is thus related.

Vidomar, viscount of Limoges, had found a treasure, of which he sent part to the king, as a present. But Richard claimed the whole: and, at the head of some Brabançons, besieged the castle of Chalus, to enforce the viscount's compliance with his demand. The garrison offered to surrender; but the king replied, that, since he had taken the trouble of besieging the place in person, he would take it by force, and hang every one of them. While he was

14 Hume's *Hist. of England*, vol. ii. 15 M. Paris.

surveying the castle, one Bertrand de Gourdon, an archer, took aim at him, and pierced his shoulder with an arrow. The king, however, gave orders for an assault; took the place, and ordered all the garrison to be hanged, except Gourdon, whom he reserved for a more cruel execution[16].

Richard's wound was not in itself dangerous, but the April 6, 1199. unskilfulness of the surgeon rendered it mortal. When he found his end approaching, he sent for Gourdon, and demanded the reason why he sought his life. "My father and my two brothers," replied the undaunted soldier, "fell by your sword, and you intended to have put "me to death. I am now in your power, and you may do "your worst; but I shall endure the most severe torments "with pleasure, provided I can think that Heaven has af- "forded me such great revenge, as, with my own hand, to "be the cause of your death." Struck with the boldness of this reply, and humbled by his approaching dissolution, Richard ordered the prisoner to be set at liberty, and a sum of money to be given to him. But the Brabançon leader Marcadée, a stranger to such generosity, seised the unhappy man, flayed him alive, and then hanged him[17].

The military talents of Richard formed the most shining part of his character. No man, even in that romantic age, carried personal courage or intrepidity to a greater height; and this quality obtained him the appellation of *Cœur de Lion*, or the *Lion-hearted hero.* As he left no issue, he was succeeded by his brother John.

The succession was disputed by Arthur, duke of Bre-

16 Hoved.—Brompton.

17 Hoved.—The Brabançons were ruffian mercenaries, formed out of the numerous bands of robbers, who, during the middle ages, infested every country of Europe, and set the civil magistrate at defiance. Excluded from the protection of general society, these banditti formed a kind of government among themselves. Troops of them were sometimes admitted into the service of princes or barons, and they often acted in an independent manner, under leaders of their own. Gul. Neubrig.

tagne, son of John's elder brother Geoffrey; and the barons of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, declared in favour of this young prince's title. The king of France also assisted him; and every thing promised success, when Arthur was unfortunately taken prisoner by his uncle John, and inhumanly murdered. A.D. 1203.

The fate of this unhappy prince is differently related; but the following account seems the most probable. After having employed unsuccessfully different assassins, John went in a boat by night, to the castle of Rouen, where Arthur was confined, and ordered him to be brought forth. Aware of his danger, and subdued by the continuance of his misfortunes, and by the approach of death, the brave youth, who had before gallantly maintained the justice of his cause, threw himself on his knees before his uncle, and begged for mercy. But the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed his nephew to the heart, and, fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine[18].

John's misfortunes commenced with his crime. He was from that moment detested by his subjects, both in England and on the continent. The Bretons, disappointed in their fondest hopes, waged implacable war against him, in order to revenge the murder of their duke: and they carried their complaints before the French monarch, as superior lord, demanding justice for the inhuman violence of John. Philip received their application with pleasure; he summoned John to be tried before him and his peers: and, on his non-appearance, he was declared guilty of felony and parricide, and all his foreign dominions were declared to be forfeited to the crown of France[19].

Nothing now remained but the execution of this sentence, to complete the glory of Philip, whose active and ambitious spirit had long with impatience borne the neigh-

18 T. Wykes.—W. Hemingf.—M. Paris.—H. Knighton.

19 *Annal. Margan.*—M. Westm.

bourhood of so powerful a vassal as the king of England. He therefore embraced, with eagerness and joy, the present opportunity of annexing to the French crown the English dominions on the continent; a project which the sound policy of Henry II. and the military genius of Richard I. had rendered impracticable to the most vigorous efforts, and most dangerous intrigues, of this
A. D. 1204. able and artful prince. But the general defection of John's vassals rendered every enterprise easy against him; and Philip not only re-united Normandy to the crown of France, but successively reduced Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and part of Poictou, under his dominion[20]. Thus, by the baseness of one prince, and the intrepidity of another, the French monarchy received, in a few years, such an accession of power and grandeur as, in the ordinary course of affairs, it might have required several ages to attain.

John's arrival in England completed his disgrace. He saw himself despised by the barons, on account of his pusillanimity and baseness; and a quarrel with the clergy drew upon him the contempt of that order, and the indignation of Rome. The papal chair was then filled by Innocent III., who having been exalted to it at a more early period of life than usual, and being endowed with a lofty and enterprising genius, gave full scope to his ambition; and attempted, perhaps more openly than any of his predecessors, to convert that spiritual superiority which was allowed to him by the European princes, into a real dominion over them; strongly inculcating that extravagant maxim, "that no princes or bishops, civil governors, or ecclesiastical rulers, have any lawful power, in church or state, but what they derive from the pope." To this
A. D. 1206. pontiff an appeal was made relative to the election of an archbishop of Canterbury. Two primates

20 Nic. Triveti *Annal.*

had been elected; one by the monks or canons of Christ-Church, Canterbury, and one by the suffragan bishops, who had the king's approbation. The pope declared both elections void; and commanded the monks to choose cardinal Langton, an Englishman by birth, but educated in France, and connected by his interests and attachments with the see of Rome. The monks complied; and John, inflamed with rage at such an usurpation of his prerogative, expelled them from the convent; swearing by God's teeth, his usual oath, that if the pope should give him any farther disturbance, he would banish all the bishops and clergy of England [21]. Innocent, however, knew his weakness, and laid the kingdom under an interdict, the grand instrument of vengeance and policy employed against sovereigns by the court of Rome. A.D. 1207.

The execution of this sentence was artfully calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate with irresistible force on the superstitious minds of the people. The nation was suddenly deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion; the altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the crosses, the reliques, the images, the statues of the saints, were laid on the ground; and, as if the air itself had been profaned, and might pollute them by its contact, the priests carefully covered them up, even from their own approach and veneration. The use of bells entirely ceased in the churches; bells themselves were removed from the steeples, and laid on the ground with the other sacred utensils. Mass was celebrated with shut doors, and none but the priests were admitted to that holy institution. The laity partook of no religious rite, except baptism of new-born infants, and the communion to the dying. The dead were not interred in consecrated ground; they were thrown into ditches, or buried in the common fields; and their obsequies were not attended with prayers, or any hal-

21 M. Paris.

lowed ceremony. The people were prohibited the use of meat, as in Lent, and debarred from all pleasures and amusements. Every thing wore the appearance of the deepest distress, and of the most immediate apprehensions of divine vengeance and indignation [22].

While England groaned under this dreadful sentence, a very extraordinary scene disclosed itself on the continent. The pope published a crusade against the Albigenses, a species of sectaries in the South of France, whom he denominated heretics, because they neglected the rites of the church, and opposed the power and influence of the clergy. A. D. 1209. Moved by that mad superstition, which had hurried such armies into Asia, and by the reigning passion for wars and adventures, people flocked from all parts of Europe to the standard of Simon de Montfort, the general of this crusade. The count of Toulouse, who protected the Albigenses, was stripped of his dominions; and these unhappy people, though the most inoffensive of mankind, were exterminated with all the circumstances of the most unfeeling barbarity [23].

Innocent, having thus made trial of his power, prosecuted his ecclesiastical vengeance against the king of England, by giving authority to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to denounce against him the sentence of excommunication. His subjects were absolved from their oath of allegiance, and a sentence of deposition soon followed. A. D. 1212. As the last sentence required an armed force to execute it, the pontiff pitched on the French king

22 John, besides banishing the bishops, and confiscating the estates of all the ecclesiastics who obeyed the interdict, took a very singular and severe revenge upon the clergy. In order to distress them in the tenderest point, and at the same time expose them to reproach and ridicule, he threw into prison all their concubines. (M. Paris.—*Ann. Waverl.*) These concubines were a sort of inferior wives, politically indulged to the clergy by the civil magistrate, after the canons of the church had enjoined celibacy to the members of that sacred body. Padre Paolo, *Hist. Conc. Trid.* lib. i.

23 *Hist. Albig.*

as the person into whose hands he could most properly entrust so terrible a weapon: and he offered to that monarch, besides the remission of all his sins, and endless spiritual benefits, the kingdom of England as the reward of his labour[24].

Seduced by the prospect of present interest, Philip accepted the pope's liberal offer, although he thereby ratified an authority which might one day hurl him from his throne, and which it was the common concern of all princes to oppose. Partly by the zeal of the age, partly by the personal regard universally paid to him, he prepared a force which seemed equal to the greatness of his enterprise. John, on the other hand, issued out writs, requiring the immediate attendance of his military vassals at Dover, and even the service of all able-bodied men, to defend the kingdom in this dangerous extremity. An infinite number appeared, out of which he selected an army of sixty thousand men. He had also a formidable fleet at Portsmouth, and he might have relied on the fidelity of both; not indeed from their attachment to him, but from that spirit of emulation which has so long subsisted between the natives of England and France.

A decisive action was expected between the two kings, when the pope artfully tricked them both, and took to himself that tempting prize which he had pretended to hold out to Philip. This extraordinary transaction was negotiated by Pandolfo, the pope's legate. In his way through France, he observed Philip's great preparations, and highly commended his zeal and diligence. He thence passed to Dover, under pretence of treating with the barons in favour of the French king, and had a conference with John on his arrival. He magnified to that prince the number of the enemy, and the disaffection of his own subjects; intimating, that there was yet one way, and but one, to secure himself from the impending

A.D. 1213.

24 M. Paris.—M. Westminst.

danger; namely, to put himself under the protection of the pope, who, like a kind and merciful father, was still willing to receive him to his bosom.

John, labouring under the apprehensions of present terror, listened to the insidious proposal, and abjectly agreed to hold his dominions as a feudatory of the church of Rome. In consequence of this agreement, he did homage to the pope in the person of his legate Pandolfo, with all the humiliating rites which the feudal law required of vassals. He came disarmed into the presence of the legate, who was seated on a throne: he threw himself on his knees before it: he lifted up his joined hands, and put them between those of Pandolfo, and swore fealty to the pope in the following words: "I John, by the grace of God, king "of England, and lord of Ireland, for the expiation of my "sins, and out of my own free will, with the advice and "consent of my barons, give to the church of Rome, and "to pope Innocent III. and his successors, the kingdoms "of England and Ireland, with all the rights belonging to "them; and I will hold them of the pope, as his vassal. "I will be faithful to God, to the church of Rome, to the "pope my lord, and to his successors lawfully elected; "and I bind myself to pay him a tribute of one thousand "marks of silver yearly; namely, seven hundred for the "kingdom of England, and three hundred for Ireland[25]."

Part of the money was immediately paid to the legate, as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom; after which the crown and sceptre were delivered to him. The insolent Italian trampled the money under his feet, to intimate the pope's superiority and the king's dependent state, and kept the *regalia* five days; then returned them to John, as a favour from the pope.

During this disgraceful negotiation, Philip waited impatiently at Boulogne for the legate's return, in order to put

25 Rym. Fœdera, vol. i.—M. Paris.

to sea. The legate at length returned; and the monarch, to his great astonishment, was desired to relinquish all thoughts of attacking England, as it was then a fief of the church of Rome, and its king a vassal of the holy see. Philip was enraged at this intelligence; he swore that he would not be a dupe to such hypocritical pretences; nor would he have desisted from his enterprise but for more weighty reasons. His fleet was nearly destroyed by the navy of England; and Otho IV., who at once disputed the empire with Frederic II., and Italy with the pope, had entered into an alliance with his uncle, the king of England, in order to oppose the designs of France, now become formidable to the rest of Europe. With this view he put himself at the head of a numerous host; and the French monarch seemed in danger of being crushed for having grasped at a present proffered to him by the pope.

Philip, however, advanced undismayed to meet his enemies, with an army of forty thousand men, commanded by the chief nobility of France. Otho was attended by Longsword the gallant earl of Salisbury, the count of Flanders, the duke of Brabant, and some German princes; and his force doubled that of Philip. The two armies met near the village of Bouvines, between Lisle and Tournay, where the allies were totally routed, and thirty thousand Germans are said to have been slain[26]. July 27, 1214.

This victory established the glory of Philip, and gave full security to all his dominions. John could therefore hope for nothing farther than henceforth to rule his own kingdom in peace; and his close alliance with the pope, which he was determined at any price to maintain, ensured him, as he imagined, the attainment of that felicity. How much was he deceived! A truce was indeed concluded with France, but the most grievous scene of this prince's misfortunes still awaited him. He was doomed to humble himself before

26 Rigord. *de Gestis Phil. August.*—P. Æmil.

his own subjects, that the rights of Englishmen might be restored, and the privileges of humanity secured and ascertained.

After the invasion of England by William the Norman, the necessity of devolving great power into the hands of a prince, who was to maintain a military dominion over a vanquished nation, had induced the barons to subject themselves to a more absolute authority than men of their rank commonly submitted to in other feudal governments; so that England, from the time of the Conquest, had groaned under a tyranny unknown to all the kingdoms founded by the Gothic conquerors. Prerogatives once exalted are not easily reduced. Different concessions had been made by the succeeding princes, in order to serve their temporary purposes. These, however, were soon disregarded, and the same authority continued to be exercised. But the feeble reign of John, who had rendered himself odious and contemptible to the whole nation, seemed to afford all ranks of men a happy opportunity of recovering their natural and constitutional rights;—and it was not neglected.

The barons entered into a confederacy, and formally demanded a restoration of their privileges; and, that their cause might wear the greater appearance of justice, they also included those of the clergy and the people. They took arms to enforce their request: they ravaged the royal domains: and John, after employing a variety of expedients in order to divert the blow aimed at the prerogatives of the crown, was obliged to treat with his subjects.

A.D. 1215.

A conference took place between the king and the barons at Runnemede, between Windsor and Staines; a spot ever since deservedly celebrated, and even hallowed by every zealous lover of liberty. There John, after a debate of some days, signed and sealed the famous *Magna Charta*, or GREAT CHARTER; which either granted or secured very important privileges to every order of men

June 15.

in the kingdom—to the barons, to the clergy, and to the people.

What these privileges particularly were you will best learn, my dear Philip, from the charter itself, which deserves your most early and continued attention, as it involves all the great outlines of a legal government, and provides for the equal distribution of justice, and free enjoyment of property; the chief objects for which political society was first founded by men, which the people have a perpetual and unalienable right to recall, and which no time, precedent, statute, or positive institution, ought to deter them from keeping ever uppermost in their thoughts[27].

The better to secure the execution of this charter, the barons stipulated with the king for the privilege of choosing twenty-five members of their own order, as conservators of the public liberties: and no bounds were set to the authority of these noblemen, either in extent or duration. If complaint should be made of a violation of the charter, any four of the conservators might admonish the king to redress the grievance; and, on the refusal of satisfaction, they might assemble the whole number. These guardians of freedom, in conjunction with the great council of the nation, were empowered to compel him to observe the charter; and, in case of resistance, might levy war against him. All men throughout the kingdom were bound, under penalty of confiscation, to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons; and the freeholders of every county

27. The most valuable stipulation in this charter, and the grand security of the lives, liberties, and property of Englishmen, was the following concession: "No "freeman shall be apprehended, imprisoned, disseised, outlawed, banished, or in "any way destroyed; nor will WE *go upon him*, nor will WE *send* upon him, except "by the *legal judgement of his peers*, or by the law of the land." The stipulation next in importance seems to be this: "To no man will we *sell*, to no man will we "*deny* or *delay*, *right* and *justice*." These concessions show, in a very strong light, the iniquitous practices and violent sway of the Anglo-Norman princes.

were to choose twelve knights, who should make report of such evil customs as required redress[28].

In what manner John acted under these regulations, to which he seemed passively to submit, together with their influence on the English constitution, and on the affairs of France, we shall afterwards have occasion to see. At present we must attend to the concerns of the other states of Europe.

28 M. Paris.—Rymer, vol. i.

LETTER XXXII.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, from the Accession of Henry VI. to the Election of Rodolph of Hapsburg, Founder of the House of Austria; with a Continuation of the History of the Crusades.

IT is necessary, my dear Philip, that I should here recapitulate a little; for there is no portion of modern history more perplexed than that under review.

The emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, died, as you have seen, in his expedition to the Holy Land; and Henry VI. received almost at the same time intelligence of the death of his father and his brother-in-law, William king of Naples and Sicily, to whose dominions he was heir in right of his wife. After settling the affairs of Germany, he levied an army, and marched into Italy, in order to be crowned by the pope, and go with the empress Constantia to recover the succession of Sicily, which was usurped by Tancred, her natural brother. With this view he endeavoured to conciliate the affections of the Italians, by enlarging the privileges of Genoa, Pisa, and other cities, in

A.D. 1190.

his way to Rome. There the ceremony of coronation was performed by Celestine III., and was accompanied with a very remarkable circumstance. That pope, who was then in his eighty-sixth year, had no sooner placed the crown upon Henry's head, than he kicked it off again, as a testimony of the power residing in the sovereign pontiff, to make and unmake emperors[1]. A. D. 1191.

Henry now prepared for the conquest of Naples and Sicily, in which he was opposed by the pope. For, although Celestine considered Tancred as an usurper, and wished to see him deprived of the crown, which he claimed, in imitation of his predecessors, as a fief of the holy see, he was still more unwilling to suffer the emperor to possess that kingdom, because such an accession of territory would render him too powerful in Italy for the interests of the church. He dreaded so formidable a vassal. Henry, however, without paying any regard to the threats and remonstrances of his holiness, took almost all the towns of Campania, Apulia, and Calabria; invested the city of Naples, and sent for the Genoese fleet, which he had engaged to form a blockade by sea. But, before its arrival, he was obliged to raise the siege, in consequence of a dreadful mortality among his troops; and all future attempts upon the kingdom of Naples and Sicily proved ineffectual during the life of Tancred[2].

The emperor, after his return to Germany, incorporated the Teutonic knights into a regular order, religious and military, and built a house for them at Coblentz. These Teutonic knights, and also the Knights Templars, and Knights Hospitalers, were originally monks, who settled in Jerusalem when it was first taken by the champions of the Cross. They were established into religious fraternities for the relief of distressed pilgrims, and for the care of the sick and wounded, without any hostile purpose. But the holy city being afterwards in danger, A. D. 1192.

1 Hoved. *Annal.*—Heiss, lib. ii. 2 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.* lib. xv.

they took up arms, and made a vow to combat the infidels, as they had formerly done to combat their own carnal inclinations. The enthusiastic zeal of the times increased their number; they became wealthy and honourable; were patronised by several princes, and formed a militia of conquerors[3]. Their exploits I shall have occasion to relate.

In what manner Richard I., king of England, was arrested on his return from the Holy Land, by Leopold duke of Austria, and detained prisoner by the emperor, we have already seen. As soon as Henry had received the money for that prince's ransom, he made new preparations A. D. 1193. for the conquest of Sicily; and, Tancred dying about the same time, he effected his purpose by the assistance of the Geonese. The queen-dowager surrendered Salerno, and her right to the crown, on condition that her son William should possess the principality of Tarentum. But Henry, joining the most atrocious cruelty to the basest perfidy, no sooner found himself master of the place, than he ordered the infant prince to be castrated, deprived of his sight, and confined in a dungeon. The royal treasure was transported to Germany, and the queen and her daughters were shut up in a convent[4].

During these transactions in Sicily, the empress, though near the age of fifty, was delivered of a son named Frederic. And Henry, in the plenitude of his power, assembled soon after a diet of the German princes, to whom he explained his intention of rendering the imperial crown hereditary, in order to prevent those disturbances which attended the election of emperors. A decree was passed for A.D. 1196. that purpose; and Frederic II., yet an infant, was declared king of the Romans[5].

In the mean time the emperor was solicited by the pope to engage in a new crusade, for the relief of the Christians in the Holy Land. He obeyed, but took care to turn

3 Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres.* 4 Sigon. *Reg. Ital.*
5 Lunig. *Arch. Imp.*—Heiss, lib. ii.

it to his advantage. He convoked a diet at Worms, where he solemnly declared his resolution of employing his whole power, and even of hazarding his life, for the accomplishment of so holy an undertaking: and he expatiated on the subject with such eloquence, that almost the whole assembly took the cross. And such multitudes, from all the provinces of the empire, enlisted themselves, that Henry divided them into three large armies; one of which, under the command of the bishop of Mentz, took the route of Hungary, where it was joined by Margaret queen of that country, who entered herself in this pious expedition, and ended her days in Palestine. The second army was assembled in Lower Saxony, and embarked in a fleet furnished by the inhabitants of Lubec, Hamburg, Holstein, and Friseland; and the emperor in person conducted the third into Italy, in order to take vengeance upon the Normans of Naples and Sicily, who had risen against his government[6].

The rebels were humbled, and their chiefs condemned to perish by the most excruciating tortures. One Jornandi, of the house of the Norman princes, was tied naked on a chair of red-hot iron, and crowned with a circle of the same burning metal, which was nailed to his head. The empress, shocked at such cruelty, renounced her faith to her husband, and encouraged her countrymen to recover their liberties. Resolution sprang from despair. The inhabitants took arms; the empress headed them; and Henry, having dismissed his troops, no longer thought necessary to his bloody purposes, and sent them to pursue their expedition to the Holy Land, (blessed atonement for his and their crimes!) was obliged to submit to his wife, and to the conditions which she was pleased to impose on him in favour of the Sicilians. He died at Messina soon after this treaty; and, as was supposed, of poison admini- Sept. 28, 1198.

6 Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

stered by the empress, who saw the ruin of her country hatching in his perfidious and vindictive heart.

Henry, amidst all his baseness, possessed some great qualities. He was active, eloquent, brave; his administration was vigorous, and his policy deep. Of all the successors of Charle-magne, no one was more feared and obeyed, either at home or abroad.

His son Frederic was now chosen emperor; but, as he was yet a minor, the government was committed to his uncle, Philip duke of Suabia, both by the will of Henry and by an assembly of the German princes. Other princes, however, incensed to see an elective empire become hereditary, held a new diet at Cologne, and chose Otho duke of Brunswick, son of Henry the Lion. Frederic's title was confirmed in a general assembly at Arnsburg; and his uncle Philip was declared king of the Romans, to give greater weight to his administration[7].

The two elections divided the empire into two powerful factions. Pope Innocent III. threw himself into the scale of Otho, and excommunicated Philip and his adherents. This able and ambitious pontiff was a determined enemy to the house of Suabia; not from any personal animosity, but out of a principle of policy. That house had long been an object of dread to the popes, from its continued possession of the imperial crown: and the accession of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily rendered it still more formidable. Innocent, therefore, joyfully embraced the present opportunity of divesting the house of Suabia of the empire, by supporting the election of Otho, and sowing divisions among the Suabian party. Otho was also patronised by his uncle, the king of England; a circumstance which naturally inclined the king of France to the side of his rival. Faction clashed with faction; friendship with interest; caprice, ambition, or resentment, gave the sway; and nothing was beheld on all hands but the horrors and miseries of civil war[8].

7 Krantz, *Hist. Sax.* lib. viii.—Heiss, lib. ii. 8 Id. ibid.—*Annal. de l'Emp.* vol. i.

The empress Constantia remained in Sicily, where all was peace, as regent and guardian for her infant son Frederic, who had been crowned king of that island, with the consent of pope Celestine III. But she also had her troubles. A new investiture from the holy see being necessary on the death of Celestine, Innocent took advantage of the critical situation of affairs to aggrandise the papacy at the expense of the kings of Sicily. They possessed, as we have seen, the privilege of filling up vacant benefices, and of judging all ecclesiastical causes in the last appeal; they were really popes in their own island, though vassals of his holiness. Innocent pretended that these powers had been surreptitiously obtained; and demanded, that Constantia should renounce them in the name of her son, and do pure and simple homage for Sicily. But before any thing was settled relative to this affair, the empress died, leaving the regency of the kingdom to the pope; so that he was enabled to prescribe what conditions he thought proper to young Frederic[9]. A. D. 1200.

The troubles of Germany still continued; and the pope redoubled his efforts to detach the princes and prelates from the cause of Philip, king of the Romans, in defiance of the expostulations of the king of France. To these remonstrances he proudly replied, "Either Philip must "lose the empire, or I the papacy[10]."

But all these dissensions and troubles in Europe did not prevent the formation of another crusade, or expedition into Asia, for the recovery of the Holy Land. The adventurers who took the cross were chiefly French and Germans. Baldwin, count of Flanders, was their commander; and the Venetians, as greedy of wealth and power as the ancient Carthaginians, furnished them with ships, for which they took care to be amply paid both in money and territory. The Christian city of Zara, in Dalmatia, had withdrawn

9 Murat. *Antiq. Ital.* vol. vi. 10. *Gest. Innocent. III.*

itself from the government of the republic: the army of the cross undertook to reduce it to obedience;
A.D. 1203. and it was besieged and taken, notwithstanding the threats and excommunications of the pope[11]. Nothing can show in a stronger light the reigning spirit of those pious adventurers.

The storm next broke upon Constantinople. Isaac Angelus had been dethroned, and deprived of his sight, in 1195, by his brother Alexis. Isaac's son, named also Alexis, who had made his escape into Germany, and was then in the army of the crusade, implored the assistance of its leaders against the usurper; engaging, in case of success, to furnish them with provisions, to pay them a large sum of money, and to submit to the jurisdiction of the pope. By their means the lawful prince was restored. He ratified the treaty made by his son, and died; when young Alexis, who was hated by the Greeks for having called in the Latins, became the victim of a new faction. One of his relatives, surnamed Murzufle, strangled him, and usurped the imperial throne[12].

Baldwin and his followers, who sought only an apology for their intended violence, had now a good one; and, under pretence of revenging the death of Alexis, made themselves masters of Constantinople. They
A.D. 1204. met with little resistance; put every one who opposed them to the sword, and indulged in all the excesses of avarice and fury. The booty of the French lords alone was valued at four hundred thousand marks of silver: the very churches were pillaged! And what strongly marks the character of that giddy nation, which has been at all times nearly the same; we are informed by Nicetas, that the French officers danced with the ladies in the sanctuary of the church of St. Sophia, after having robbed the altar, and drenched the city in blood.

11 Maimbourg, *Hist. des Croisades.* 12 Nicet. *Chron.*

Thus was Constantinople, the most flourishing Christian city in the world, plundered by the Christians themselves, who had vowed to fight only against infidels!—Baldwin, the most powerful of these ravagers, procured the dignity of emperor; and this new usurper condemned the other usurper, Murzufle, to be thrown headlong from the top of a lofty column. The Venetians had, for their share of the conquered empire, Peloponnesus, the island of Candia, and several cities on the coast of Phrygia; and the marquis of Montferrat seised Thessaly; so that Baldwin had little left except Thrace and Mœsia. The pope gained, for a time, the whole eastern church; and, in a word, an acquisition was made of much greater consequence than Palestine. Of this, indeed, the conquerors seemed fully convinced; for, notwithstanding the vow they had taken, to succour Jerusalem, only a very inconsiderable number of the many knights who had engaged in this pious enterprise went into Syria, and those were such as could obtain no share in the spoils of the Greeks[13].

Innocent III., speaking of this conquest, says, in one of his letters, "God, willing to console his church by the "re-union of the schismatics, has made the empire pass "from the proud, superstitious, disobedient Greeks, to the "humble, pious, catholic, and submissive Latins." So easy it is by words to give to persons and things that complexion which most favours our interests and our prejudices!

I should now, my dear Philip, return to the affairs of Germany; but a few more particulars, consequent on the reduction of Constantinople, require first to be noted, as they cannot afterward be so properly brought under review.

There still remained many princes of the imperial house of Comnenus, who did not lose their courage with the destruction of their empire. One of these, named Alexis,

13 Nicet.—Cantacuzen.

took refuge on the coast of Colchis, and erected a petty state, which he styled the empire of Trebisond; so much was the word *empire* abused!—Theodore Lascaris retook Nice, and settled himself in Bithynia, by opportunely making use of the Arabs against the Turks. He also assumed the title of emperor, and caused a patriarch to be elected of his own communion. Other Greeks entered into an alliance with the Turks, and even invited their ancient enemies, the Bulgarians, to assist them against the emperor Baldwin, who, being overcome by those barbarians near Adrianople, had his legs and arms cut off, and was left a prey to wild beasts[14]. Henry, his brother and successor, was poisoned in 1216; and, in 1261, the imperial city, which had declined under the Latins, returned to the Greeks.

A. D. 1206.

Diverting our attention from the East, we find Philip and Otho desolating the West. At length Philip prevailed; and Otho, obliged to abandon Germany, took refuge in England. Philip, who was now crowned emperor, proposed an accommodation with the pope; but before it could be adjusted, he was assassinated by the count Palatine of Bavaria, in consequence of a private dispute[15].

A. D. 1208.

Otho returned to Germany on the death of Philip, married that prince's daughter, and was crowned at Rome, after yielding to the holy see the long-disputed inheritance of the countess Matilda, and confirming the rights and privileges of the Italian cities.

A. D. 1209.

But these concessions, as far at least as they regarded the pope, were only a sacrifice to present policy. Otho no sooner found himself in a condition to act offensively, than he resumed his grant; and not only recovered the possessions of the empire, but made hostile incursions into Apulia, ravaging the dominions of young Frederic, king of Naples and Sicily, who was under the protection of

A. D. 1210.

14 Nicet.—Cantacuzen.

15 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. xv.

the holy see. Hence we may date the ruin of Otho. The pope excommunicated him; and Frederic was re-elected emperor by the German princes[16]. A.D. 1211.

Otho, however, on his return to Germany, finding his party still considerable, and not doubting that he should be able to humble his rival by means of his superior force, entered into an alliance with the king of England against the French monarch. The unfortunate battle of Bouvines, where the confederates were defeated, as we have seen, completed the ruin of Otho. Abandoned by all the princes of Germany, and altogether without resource, he retired to Brunswick, where he lived above three years as a private man, dedicating his time to the duties of religion. He was not deposed, but forgotten; and if it be true that, in the excess of his humility, he ordered himself to be thrown down, and trodden upon by his kitchen-boys, we may well say with Voltaire, that the kicks of a turn-spit can never expiate the faults of a prince[17]. A.D. 1213. A.D. 1214.

Frederic II., being now universally acknowledged emperor, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle with great magnificence: and, in order to preserve the favour of the pope, he added to the other solemnities of his coronation a vow to go in person to the Holy Land[18]. A.D. 1215.

About this time pope Innocent died, and was succeeded by Honorius III., who expressed great eagerness in forwarding the crusade, which he ordered to be preached through all the provinces of Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Bohemia, and Hungary; and his endeavours were crowned with success. The emperor indeed excused himself from the performance of his vow, until he should have regulated the affairs of Italy; and other European monarchs were likewise unwilling to embark personally in the expedition. But an infinite number of private noble- A.D. 1216.

16 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. xvi.

17 *Annal. de l'Emp.* vol. ii.

18 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. xvii.

men and their vassals took the cross, under the dukes of Austria and Bavaria, the archbishop of Mentz, and the bishops of Munster and Utrecht; and Andrew II., king of Hungary, was declared generalissimo of the crusade[19].

While the adventurers of Upper Germany marched towards Italy, in order to embark at Venice, Genoa, A.D. 1217. and Messina, a fleet was equipped in the ports of Lower Saxony, to transport the troops of Westphalia, Saxony, and the territory of Cologne. These, joining the squadron of the Friselanders, Flemings, and subjects of Brabant, commanded by the counts of Holland, Weerden, and Berg, set sail for the straits of Gibraltar, on their voyage to Ptolemais. But being driven by a tempest into the road of Lisbon, they were prevailed upon to assist Alphonso II., king of Portugal, against the Moors. They defeated the infidels, and took from them the city of Alcazar[20].

The king of Hungary and his army, having joined the king of Cyprus, landed at Ptolemais; where he was joyfully received by John de Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem. After refreshing and reviewing their forces, the two kings marched against the Saracens, with the wood of the true cross carried before them. The troops of Saifeddin, soltan of Egypt and Syria, being greatly out-numbered by the Christians, retired without giving battle; and the champions of the cross undertook the siege of Thabor, in which they miscarried. They now separated themselves into four bodies

19 *Annal. Paderborn.*—It may here be observed, that Hungary (which, though its name refers to the Huns, was chiefly inhabited by the Igours, a colony from Finland, the Sclavonians, and the Germans) became a kingdom in the year 1000, under Stephen, the son of duke Geysa, who had embraced the Christian religion. His brother-in-law Ovo was defeated and slain in 1044, by the emperor Henry III. Ladislaus I., who distinguished himself by his victories and conquests, died in 1095, and was afterwards canonised. The crown continued to be enjoyed by the family of Geysa, though the monarchy had been declared elective. The nineteenth king was the prince whom I have mentioned as the leader of the crusards.

20 *Annal. Paderborn.*

for the conveniency of subsisting. The king of Cyprus died; and the Hungarian monarch returned to his own dominions, in order to quiet some disturbances which had arisen during his absence [21]. A. D. 1218.

The fleet from the coast of Portugal arrived in Palestine soon after the departure of the king of Hungary; and it was resolved in a council of war to besiege Damietta in Egypt, which was accordingly invested by sea and land. During the siege Saifeddin died; and his son Al-Kamel Naseredin, who came to the relief of the town, was defeated. The duke of Austria, with a considerable body of men, returned soon after to Germany; and a reinforcement arrived from the emperor, under the conduct of cardinal Albano, legate of the holy see [22]. A.D. 1219.

This cardinal, who was a Spanish Benedictine, pretended that he, as representative of the pope, the natural head of the crusade, had an incontestable right to be general; and that, as the king of Jerusalem held his crown only by virtue of the pope's licence, he ought in all things to pay obedience to the legate of his holiness. Much time was spent in that dispute, and in writing to Rome for his advice. At length the pope's answer came, by which he ordered the king of Jerusalem to serve under the Benedictine: and his orders were punctually obeyed. John de Brienne resigned the command; and the monkish general led the army of the cross between two branches of the Nile, just at the time when that river, which fertilises and defends Egypt, began to overflow its banks. The soltan, informed of the exact state of affairs, flooded the camp of the Christians, by opening the sluices; and while he burned their ships on the one side, the Nile, increasing on the other, threatened to swallow up their whole army. The legate now saw himself and his troops in a similar extremity to that in which the Egyptians under Pharaoh are

21 Jac. de Vitri.—Maimbourg.

22 Vertot, *Hist. des Cher. de Malthe*, vol. i.—Maimbourg. vol. ii.

described, when they beheld the sea ready to rush in upon them. In consequence of this pressing danger, Damietta, which had been taken after a long siege, was restored; and the leaders of the crusade were obliged to conclude a dishonourable treaty, by which they bound themselves not to serve against the soltan of Egypt for eight years[23].

A. D. 1221.

The Christians of the East had now no hopes left but in Frederic II., who was about this time crowned at Rome by Honorius, whose friendship he had purchased, by promising to detach Naples and Sicily from the empire, and bestow them on his son Henry, as fiefs of the holy see. He also promised to pass into Asia with an army, at any time the pope should appoint: but this promise he was not inclined to perform. He was indeed more worthily employed in embellishing and aggrandising Naples; in establishing an university in that city, where the Roman law was taught; and in expelling the vagrant Saracens, who still infested Sicily[24].

In the mean time the unfortunate leaders of the crusade arrived in Europe; and the pope, incensed at the loss of Damietta, wrote a severe letter to the emperor, taxing him with having sacrificed the interest of Christianity by the neglect of his vow, and threatening him with immediate excommunication if he did not instantly depart with an army into Asia. Frederic exasperated at these reproaches, renounced all correspondence with the court of Rome; renewed his ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Sicily; filled up vacant sees and benefices; and expelled some bishops, who were creatures of the pope, on pretence of their being concerned in practices against the state.

A.D. 1225.

A. D. 1226.

Honorius at first attempted to combat rigour with rigour, menacing the emperor with the thunder of the church, for presuming to lift up his hand against the

23 Vertot, *Hist. des Chev. de Malthe*, vol. i.—Maimbourg.
24 Sigon. *Rég. Ital.*—Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

sanctuary; but finding that Frederic was not to be intimidated by such threats, his holiness became sensible of his own imprudence, in wantonly incurring the resentment of so powerful a prince, and thought proper to soothe him by submissive apologies and gentle exhortations. A reconciliation now took place; and after a conference at Veroli, the emperor, as a proof of his sincere attachment to the church, published some very severe edicts against heresy, which seem to have authorised the tribunal of the Inquisition [25].

A solemn assembly was afterwards holden at Ferentino, where both Frederic and the pope were present, together with John de Brienne, who had returned to Europe to demand succours against the soltan of Egypt. John had an only daughter named Yolanta, whom he proposed as a wife to the emperor, with the kingdom of Jerusalem as her dowry, on condition that Frederic should, within two years, perform the vow he had made to lead an army into the Holy Land. Frederic married her on these terms, because he wished to please the pope; and since that time the kings of Sicily have taken the title of king of Jerusalem. But the emperor was not very eager to attempt the conquest of his wife's portion, having other business to perform. The chief cities of Lombardy had entered into a secret league, with a view to throw off his authority. He convoked a diet at Cremona, where all the German and Italian noblemen were summoned to attend. A variety of subjects were there discussed; but nothing of consequence was settled. An accommodation, however, resulted from the mediation of the pope, who, as umpire of the dispute, decreed, that the emperor should lay aside his resentment against the confederate towns, and that the towns should furnish and maintain four hundred knights for the relief of the Holy Land [26].

A. D. 1227.

Peace being thus concluded, Honorius reminded the

25 Petr. de Vignes, lib. i.

26 Richardi *Chron.* ap. Murat.

emperor of his vow: Frederic promised compliance; but his holiness died before he could see the execution of a project which he seemed to have so much at heart. He was succeeded by Gregory IX., who, pursuing the same line of policy, urged the departure of Frederic for the Holy Land, and, finding him still backward, declared him incapable of holding the imperial dignity, as having incurred the sentence of excommunication. Frederic, incensed at such insolence, ravaged the patrimony of St. Peter, and was actually excommunicated. The
A.D. 1228. animosity between the Guelphs and Ghibellines revived; the pope was obliged to quit Rome; and Italy became a scene of war and desolation, or rather of numerous civil wars, which, by inflaming the minds, and exciting the resentment of the Italian princes, unfortunately accustomed them to the horrid practices of poisoning and assassination.

To remove the cause of so many troubles, and gratify the prejudices of a superstitious age, Frederic resolved to perform his vow. He accordingly embarked for the Holy Land, leaving the affairs of Italy to the management of Renaldo, duke of Spoleto. The pope prohibited his departure, before he was absolved from the censures of the church. But Frederic went in contempt of the church, and succeeded better than any commander who had gone before him. He did not indeed desolate Asia, and gratify the barbarous zeal of the times, by shedding the blood of infidels; but he concluded a treaty with the sol-
A.D. 1229. tan of Egypt, by which the end of his expedition seemed fully answered. The soltan ceded to him Jerusalem, and its territory, as far as Joppa; Bethlehem, Nazareth, and all the country between Jerusalem and Ptolemais; Tyre, Sidon, and the neighbouring dis-
A.D. 1230. tricts. In return for these concessions, the emperor granted the Saracens a truce for ten years[27].

27 *Annal. Boior.* lib. vii.—Heiss. lib. ii. cap. xvii.—Maimbourg.

His reign, after his return from the East, was one continued quarrel with the popes. The cities of Lombardy had revolted during his absence, at the instigation of Gregory IX.; and, before they could be reduced, the same pontiff excited the emperor's son Henry, who had been elected king of the Romans, to rebel against his father. A.D. 1235. The rebellion was suppressed, the prince was confined, and Frederic obtained a complete victory over the associated towns; but his troubles were not yet at an end. The pope again excommunicated him, and, to sow division between him and the princes of the empire, A.D. 1237. sent a bull into Germany, in which are the following remarkable words. "A "beast of blasphemy, abounding with names, is risen "from the sea, with the feet of a bear, the face of a lion, "and members of other different animals; which, like "the proud, hath opened its mouth in blasphemy against "the holy name; not even fearing to throw the arrows of "calumny against the tabernacle of God, and the saints "that dwell in heaven. This beast, desirous of breaking "every thing in pieces with his iron teeth and nails, and "of trampling all things under his feet, hath already prepared private battering rams against the wall of the catholic faith; and now raises open machines, in erecting "soul-destroying schools of Ishmaelites; rising, according to report, in opposition to Christ the Redeemer of "mankind, the table of whose covenant he attempts to "abolish with the pen of wicked heresy. Be not therefore surprised at the malice of this blasphemous beast, "if we, who are the servants of the Almighty, should be "exposed to the arrows of his destruction.—This king of "plagues was even heard to say, that the whole world "has been deceived by three impostors; namely, Moses, "Jesus Christ, and Mohammed. But he makes Jesus "Christ far inferior to the other two: 'They,' says he, 'supported their glory to the last, whereas Christ was ignominiously crucified.' He also maintains," conti-

nues Gregory, "that it is folly to believe the ONE only "God, Creator of the Universe, could be born of a *wo-* "*man*, especially of a *virgin*[28]."

Frederic on the other hand, in his apology to the princes of Germany, calls Gregory the *Great Dragon*, the *Antichrist*, of whom it is written, "and another Red "Horse arose from the sea, and he that sat upon him "took Peace from the Earth[29]."

The emperor's apology was sustained in Germany; and, finding he had nothing to fear from that quarter, he resolved to take ample vengeance on the pope and his associates. With that view he marched to Rome, where he thought his party was strong enough to procure him admission. But this favourite scheme was defeated by the activity of Gregory, who ordered a crusade to be preached against the emperor, as an enemy of the Christian faith; a step which so incensed Frederic, that he ordered all his prisoners, who wore the cross, to be exposed to the most cruel tortures[30].

A.D. 1239.

The two factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines continued to rage with greater violence than ever; involving cities, districts, and even private families, in troubles, divisions, and civil butchery, no quarter being given on either side. Meanwhile Gregory IX. died, and was succeeded by Celestine IV., and afterwards by Innocent IV., formerly cardinal Fieschi, who had always expressed the greatest regard for the emperor and his interest. Frederic was accordingly congratulated upon this occasion; but, having a greater degree of penetration than those about him, he replied, "I see little rea-"son to rejoice. The cardinal was my friend; but the "pope will be my enemy."

A.D. 1243.

Innocent soon proved the justice of this conjecture. He ambitiously attempted to negotiate a peace for Italy. But

28 Gob. Pers. *Cosmod.* cap. lxiv. 29 Id. ibid.
30 Krantz, lib. viii.—Murat. *Annal. Ital.* vol. vii.

not being able to obtain from Frederic his exorbitant demands, and apprehensive of danger to his own person, he fled into France, assembled a general council at Lyons, and deposed the emperor. "I declare," said he, "Frederic II. attainted and convicted of sacri-"lege and heresy, excommunicated and dethroned: and "I order the electors to choose another emperor, reserv-"ing to myself the disposal of the kingdom of Sicily[31]." A. D. 1245.

Frederic was at Turin when he received the news of his deposition, and behaved in a manner that seemed to border upon weakness. He called for the casket in which the imperial ornaments were kept; and opening it, and taking the crown in his hand, "Innocent," cried he, "has not "yet deprived me of thee: thou art still mine! and be-"fore I part with thee much blood shall be spilled[32]."

Conrad, the emperor's second son, had been declared king of the Romans, on the death of his brother Henry, which soon followed his confinement; but the imperial throne being now declared vacant by the pope, the German bishops (for none of the princes were present), at the instigation of his holiness, proceeded to the election of a new emperor; and they chose Henry, landgrave of Thuringia, who was styled in derision, "The "King of Priests." A. D. 1246.

Innocent now renewed the crusade against Frederic. It was proclaimed by the preaching friars, since called Dominicans, and the minor friars, known by the name of Cordeliers or Franciscans, a new militia of the court of Rome, which, about this time, began to be established in Europe. The pope, however, did not confine himself to these measures, but engaged in conspiracies against the life of an emperor who had dared to resist the decree of a council, and oppose the whole body of monks and zealots. Frederic's life was several times in danger from these plots, which induced him, it is said, to make choice of

31 Gob. Pers. ubi sup. 32 M. Par. *Hist. Maj.*

Mohammedan guards, who, he was certain, would not be under the influence of the prevailing superstition.

On the decease of the landgrave of Thuringia, the same prelates who had taken the liberty of creating one emperor chose another; namely, William count of Holland, a young nobleman of twenty years of age, who bore the same contemptuous title as his predecessor[33].

A.D. 1248.

Fortune, which had hitherto favoured Frederic, seemed now to desert him. He was defeated before Parma, which he had long besieged; and to complete his misfortune, he soon after learned, that his natural son Entius, whom he had made king of Sardinia, was worsted and taken prisoner by the Bolognese. In this extremity, he retired to his kingdom of Naples, in order to recruit his army; and there died of a fever, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. He was a prince of great genius, erudition, and fortitude; and, notwithstanding all the turmoils of his reign, he built towns, founded universities, and gave, as it were, a new life to learning in Italy.

A. D. 1250.

After the death of this prince, the affairs of Germany fell into the utmost confusion, and Italy continued long in the same distracted state in which he had left it. The clergy took arms against the laity, the weak were oppressed by the strong, and laws divine and human were disregarded. But a particular history of that unhappy period would fill the mind with disgust and horror: I shall therefore only observe, that after the death of Frederic's son Conrad (who had assumed the imperial dignity as successor to his father) and of his competitor, William of Holland, many candidates appeared for the empire, and several were elected by different factions; among whom was Richard earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III. king of England. But no emperor was properly acknowledged, till the year 1273, when Rodolph, count of Hapsburg, was unanimously raised to the vacant throne.

A. D. 1256.

33 *Annal. Boior.*

During the interregnum which preceded the election of Rodolph, the king of Hungary and the count of Holland entirely freed themselves from the homage which they had been accustomed to pay to the empire; and, nearly about the same time, several German cities erected a municipal form of government, which still continues. Lubec, Cologne, Brunswic, and Dantzic, united for their mutual defence against the encroachments of the great lords, by a famous association, called the Hanseatic League; and these towns were afterwards joined by eighty others, belonging to different states, which formed a kind of commercial republic. Italy also, during this period, assumed a new form of government. That freedom for which the cities of Lombardy had so long struggled was confirmed to them for a sum of money: they were emancipated by the fruits of their industry. Sicily likewise changed its government and its prince, as will be related in the history of France, which furnished a sovereign to the Sicilians.

I next propose to carry forward the affairs of England, to the reign of Edward I., a period at which the history of our own island becomes peculiarly interesting to every Briton.

LETTER XXXIII.

History of England, from the Grant of the Great Charter, to the Reign of Edward I.

YOU have already seen, my dear Philip, in what manner king John was forced by his barons to grant the Great Charter of English liberty, and to accede to such regulations

A. D. 1225. as were deemed necessary for preserving it. He went still farther: he dismissed his forces, and promised that his government should be as gentle as his people could wish it. But he only dissembled in the expectation of an opportunity of revoking all his concessions; and, in order to accelerate such an event, he secretly sent emissaries to enlist foreign soldiers, and to invite the rapacious Brabançons into his service, by the prospect of sharing the spoils of England. He also dispatched a messenger to Rome, to lay the Great Charter before the pope, who, considering himself as superior lord of the kingdom, was incensed at the presumption of the barons, and issued a bull annulling the charter, absolving the king from his oath to observe it, and denouncing excommunication against all who should persevere in maintaining such treasonable pretensions[1].

John now pulled off the mask; he recalled his concessions; and, as his foreign mercenaries arrived with the bull, he expected nothing but universal submission. But our gallant ancestors were not so easily frightened out of their rights. Langton, the primate, though he owed his elevation to an encroachment of the court of Rome, refused to obey the pope in publishing the sentence of excommunication against the barons. Persons of all ranks, among the clergy as well as laity, seemed determined to maintain, at the expense of their lives, the privileges granted in the Great Charter. John had therefore nothing to rely on for the re-establishment of his tyranny, but the sword of his Brabançons: and that unfortunately proved too strong, if not for the liberties of England, at least for its prosperity.

The barons, after obtaining the Great Charter, had sunk into a kind of fatal security. They not only dismissed their vassals, but did not take proper measures for re-assembling them on any emergency: so that the king found himself

1 Rymer, vol. i.—M. Paris.

master of the field, without an adequate force to oppose him. Castles were defended, and skirmishes risqued, but no regular opposition was made to the progress of the royal arms; while the ravenous mercenaries, incited by a cruel and incensed prince, were let loose against the houses and estates of the barons, and spread devastation over the whole face of the kingdom. Nothing was to be seen, from Dover to Berwick, but the flames of villages, castles reduced to ashes, and the consternation and misery of the helpless inhabitants[2].

In this desperate extremity, the barons dreading the total loss of their liberties, their lives, and their possessions, had recourse to a remedy no less desperate. They offered to acknowledge, as their sovereign, prince Louis, eldest son of the king of France, provided he would protect them from the fury of their enraged monarch. The temptation was too great to be resisted by a prince of Philip's ambition. He sent over instantly a small army to the relief of the barons, and afterwards a more numerous body of forces, with his son at their head; although the pope's legate threatened him with interdicts and excommunications, if he should presume to invade the dominions of a prince who was under the immediate protection of the holy see. As Philip was assured of the fidelity of his subjects, these menaces did not deter him from his purpose. He took care, however, to preserve appearances in his acts of violence. He pretended that his son had accepted the offer from the English barons without his advice, and against his inclinations, and that the armies sent into England were levied in that prince's name. But these artifices were not employed by Philip to deceive. He knew that the pope had too much penetration to be so easily imposed upon, and that they were too gross even to gull the people; but he knew, at the same time, that the manner of

A. D. 1216.

2 M. Paris.—*Chron. Mailros.*

conducting any measure is nearly of as much consequence as the measure itself, and that a violation of decency, in the eye of the world, is more criminal than a breach of justice.

Louis no sooner landed in England than John was deserted by his foreign troops, who, being principally levied in the French provinces, refused to serve against the heir of their monarchy; so that the barons had the melancholy prospect of succeeding in their purpose, and of escaping the tyranny of their own king, by imposing on themselves and the nation a foreign yoke. But the imprudent partiality of Louis to his countrymen increased that jealousy, which it was so natural for the English to entertain in their present situation, and did great injury to his cause. Many of the dissatisfied barons returned to the king's party; and John was preparing to make a last effort for his crown, Oct. 19. when death put an end to his troubles and his crimes, in the fifty-first year of his age, and the eighteenth of his reign. His character was a complication of vices, equally mean and odious; ruinous to himself and destructive to his people. But a sally of wit upon the usual corpulence of the priests, more than all his enormities, made him pass with the clergy of that age for an impious prince. "How plump and well-fed is this animal!" exclaimed he, on having caught a very fat stag;—"and yet I dare swear "he never heard mass[3]."

John was succeeded by his son Henry III., who was then only nine years old; and for once a minority proved of singular service to England. The earl of Pembroke, who by his office of mareschal was at the head of the military power, and consequently, in perilous times, at the head of the state, determined to support the authority of the infant prince. He was chosen protector; and, fortunately for the young monarch and for the nation, the regency could not

3 M. Paris.

have been committed to more able or more faithful hands. In order to reconcile all classes of men to the government of Henry, he persuaded him to renew and confirm the Great Charter. And he wrote letters in the king's name to all the malcontent barons, representing, that whatever animosity they might have harboured against John, they ought to retain none against his son, who, though he inherited his throne, had not succeeded either to his resentments or his principles, and was resolved to avoid the paths which had led to such dangerous extremities; exhorting them, at the same time, by a speedy return to their duty, to restore the independence of the kingdom, and secure that liberty for which they had so zealously contended[4].

These arguments, enforced by the character of Pembroke, had a great influence on the barons. Most of them secretly negotiated with him, and many of them openly returned to their duty. Louis, therefore, who had passed over to France and brought fresh succours from that kingdom, found his party much weakened on his return; and that the death of John, contrary to all expectation, had blasted his favourite scheme. He laid siege, however, to Dover, which was gallantly defended by Hubert de Burgh. In the mean time the French army, commanded by the count de Perche, was totally defeated by the earl of Pembroke, near Lincoln; and four hundred knights, with many persons of superior rank, were made prisoners by the English. Louis, when informed of this disastrous event, retired to London, which was the centre and life of his party. He there received intelligence of a new misfortune, which extinguished all his hopes. A French fleet, having a considerable reinforcement on board, had been repulsed in the channel with great loss[5].

A.D. 1217.

The English barons now hastened from all quarters to make peace with the protector, and prevent, by an early

4 Rymer, vol. i.—Brady, *Append.* No. 143.

5 M. Paris.

submission, those attainders to which they were exposed on account of their rebellion; while Louis, whose cause was now totally desperate, began to be anxious for the safety of his person, and was glad, on any tolerable conditions, to make his escape from a country in which every thing had become hostile to him. He accordingly concluded a treaty with Pembroke, by which he promised to evacuate the kingdom; only stipulating, in return, an indemnity to his adherents, a restitution of their honours and fortunes, and the free and equal enjoyment of those liberties which had been granted to the rest of the nation[6]. Thus, my dear Philip, was happily terminated a civil war, which seemed to spring from the most incurable hatred and jealousy, and had threatened to reduce England into a province of France.

The prudence and equity of the protector, after the expulsion of the French, contributed to cure entirely those wounds which had been made by intestine discord. He received the rebellious barons into favour; strictly observed the terms of peace which he had granted to them; and endeavoured, by an equal behaviour, to bury all past animosities in perpetual oblivion. But, unfortunately for the kingdom, this great and good man did not long survive the pacification: and, as Henry, when he reached the age of adolescence, proved a weak and contemptible prince, England was again involved in civil commotions, which it would be idle and impertinent to relate; as they were neither followed, during many years, by an event of importance to society, nor attended with any circumstances which can throw light upon the human character. Their causes and consequences were alike insignificant.

It is necessary, however, to observe, that the king having married Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, was surrounded by a multitude of strangers, from that and other countries, whom he caressed with the fondest affection, and

6 Rymer, vol. i.

enriched by an imprudent generosity. The insolence of these foreigners, it is said, rose to such a height, that when, on account of their outrages or oppressions, an appeal was made to the laws, they scrupled not to say, "What do the "laws of England signify to us? We mind them not." This open contempt of the English constitution roused the resentment of the barons, and highly aggravated the general discontent arising from the preference shown to strangers, as it made every act of violence, committed by a foreigner, appear not only an injury, but an insult. Yet no remonstrance or complaint could prevail on the king to abandon them, or even to moderate his attachment towards them.

Henry's profuse bounty to his foreign relatives, and to their friends and favourites, would have appeared less intolerable to the English, had any thing been done for the benefit of the nation, or had the king's enterprises in foreign countries been attended with any success or glory to himself or the public. Neither of these, however, was the case. As imprudence governed his policy, misfortune marked his measures. He declared war against France, and made an expedition into Guienne, upon the invitation of his father-in-law, who promised to join him with all his forces; but being worsted near Saintes, he was deserted by his allies, lost what remained to him of Poictou, and was obliged to return with disgrace into England[7].

A. D. 1242.

Want of œconomy, and an ill-judged liberality, were the great defects in Henry's domestic administration. These kept him always indigent, and obliged him continually to harass his barons for money, under different pretences. Their discontents were thus increased, and he was still a beggar. Even before his foreign expedition, his debts had become so troublesome, that he sold all his plate and jewels, in order to discharge them. When this expedient

7 M. Paris.—W. Heming.—*Chron. Dunst.*

was first proposed to him, he asked where he should find purchasers. "In the city of London," it was replied. "On my word," said he, "if the treasury of Augustus "were brought to sale, the citizens are able to be the pur- "chasers. These clowns, who assume to themselves the "name of barons, abound in every thing, while I am re- "duced to extreme necessity[8]." And he was thenceforth observed to be more greedy in his exactions from the citizens.

The grievances, however, of which the English during this reign had reason to complain in their civil government, seem to have been less burthensome than those which proceeded from spiritual usurpations and abuses, and which Henry, who relied on the pope for the support of his tottering authority, never failed to countenance. The chief benefices of the kingdom were conferred on Italians; and non-residence and pluralities were carried to so enormous a height, that Mansel, the king's chaplain, is said to have enjoyed, at one time, seven hundred ecclesiastical livings. The pope exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices; the twentieth of all ecclesiastical revenues, without exception; the third of such as exceeded one hundred marks a year; and the half of such as were possessed by non-residents. He also claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen; and pretended a right to inherit all money gained by usury.

But the most oppressive expedient employed by the court of Rome, in order to drain money from England, was that of embarking Henry in a project for the conquest A. D. 1250. of Sicily. On the death of the emperor Frederic II., the succession of that island devolved to his son Conrad, and afterwards to his grandson Conradin, yet an infant; and as Mainfroy, the emperor's natural son, under pretence of governing the kingdom during the minority of the prince, had formed an intention of usurping the sovereignty,

8 M. Paris.

Innocent IV. had a good apology for exerting that superiority which the popes claimed over Sicily, and at the same time an opportunity of gratifying his hatred against the house of Suabia. He accordingly attempted to make himself master of the kingdom; but, being disappointed in all his enterprises by the activity and artifices of Mainfroy, and finding that his own force was not sufficient for such a conquest, he made a tender of the crown to Henry's brother Richard earl of Cornwall, one of the richest subjects in Europe. The earl had the prudence to reject the dangerous present, but not the power to prevent the evil. The same offer being afterwards made to the king, in favour of his second son Edmund, that weak monarch was led, by the levity and thoughtlessness of his disposition, to embrace the insidious proposal; and immense sums were drawn from England, under pretence of carrying this project into execution; for the pope took that upon himself. But the money was still found insufficient: the conquest of Sicily was as remote as ever. Henry, therefore, sensible at length of the delusion, was obliged to resign into the pope's hands that crown which he had more than purchased, but which it was never intended either he or his family should inherit[9]. A. D. 1255.

The earl of Cornwall had reason to value himself on his foresight, in refusing the fraudulent bargain with Rome, and in preferring the solid honours of an opulent and powerful prince of the blood in England, to the empty and precarious glory of a foreign dignity; but he had not always firmness sufficient to adhere to this resolution. His immense wealth induced some of the German princes to propose him as a candidate for the empire, after the death of William of Holland; and his vanity and ambition for once prevailed over his prudence and his avarice. He went over to Germany, was tempted to expend vast A. D. 1256.

9 Rymer, vol. i.—M. Paris.—*Chron. Dunst.*

sums on his election, and succeeded so far as to be chosen by a faction, and crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle; but, having no personal or family connexions in that country, he never could attain any solid power. He therefore found it necessary to return to England, after having lavished the frugality of a whole life in the vain pursuit of a splendid title[10].

England, in the meanwhile, was involved in new troubles. The weakness of Henry's government, and the absence of his brother, gave reins to the factious and turbulent spirit of the barons. They demanded an extension of their privileges; and, if we may credit the historians of those times, had formed a plan of so many limitations of the royal authority, as would have reduced the king to a mere cipher. Henry would agree to nothing but a renewal of the Great Charter; which, at the desire of the barons, was ratified in the following manner. All the prelates and abbots were assembled: they held burning tapers in their hands; the Great Charter was read before them; they denounced the sentence of excommunication against every one who should violate that fundamental law; they threw their tapers on the ground, and exclaimed, "May "the soul of every one, who incurs this sentence, so stink "and corrupt in hell!" The king also bore a part in the ceremony, and subjoined, "So help me God! I will "keep all these articles inviolate, as I am a man, as I am "a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned "and anointed[11]."

This tremendous ceremony had no effect on the king, who instantly forgot his engagements; and the barons boldly renewed their pretensions. At the head of the malcontents was Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, a man of great talents and boundless ambition, who had married Eleanor, the king's sister, and hoped to wrest the sceptre

10 M. Paris. 11 W. Heming.—M. Paris.—M. Westm.

from the feeble and irresolute hand that held it. He represented to his associates the necessity of reforming the state, and of putting the execution of the laws into other hands than those which had hitherto been found, from repeated experience, unfit for that important charge. After so many submissions and fruitless promises, the king's word, he said, could no longer be relied on; and only his inability to violate national privileges could thenceforth ensure their preservation.

These observations, which were founded in truth, and entirely conformable to the sentiments of those to whom they were addressed, had the desired effect. The barons resolved to take the administration into their own hands: and Henry, having summoned a parliament at Oxford, found himself a prisoner in his national council, and was obliged to submit to the terms prescribed to him, called the Provisions of Oxford. According to these regulations, twelve barons were selected from among the king's ministers; twelve more were chosen by the parliament; and to these twenty-four noblemen unlimited authority was granted to reform the state. Leicester was at the head of this legislative body, to which the supreme power was in reality transferred: and their first step seemed well calculated for the end which they professed to have in view. They ordered that four knights should be chosen by each county; that they should make inquiry into the grievances of which their neighbourhood had reason to complain, and should attend the ensuing parliament, in order to give information of the state of their particular counties[12].

A.D. 1258.

Instead of continuing in the same popular course, the earl and his associates studiously provided for the extension and prolongation of their own exorbitant authority, at the expense both of the king and the people. They enjoyed the

12 Rymer, vol. i.—*Chron. Dunst.*

supreme power three years; and had visibly employed it, not for the reformation of the state, their original pretence for assuming it, but for the aggrandisement of themselves and their families. The breach of trust was notorious; all felt it, and murmured against it; and the pope, in order to gain the favour of the nation, absolved the king and his subjects from the oath which they had taken to observe the Provisions of Oxford.

A. D. 1261.

As soon as Henry received the pope's absolution from his oath, accompanied with threats of excommunication against all his opponents, he resumed the government; offering, however, to maintain all the regulations made by the reforming barons, except those which entirely annihilated the royal authority. But these haughty chieftains could not peaceably resign that uncontrolled power which they had so long enjoyed. Many of them adopted Leicester's views, which held in prospect nothing less than the throne itself. The civil war was renewed in all its horrors: and, after several fruitless negotiations, the collected force of the two parties met near Lewes in Sussex, where the royal army was totally defeated, and the king and his brother were made prisoners[13].

A. D. 1262.

A. D. 1263.

May 14, 1264.

No sooner had Leicester obtained this victory, than he acted as sole master, and even tyrant of the kingdom. He seised the estates of no less than eighteen barons, as his share of the spoil gained in the late battle: he engrossed to himself the ransom of all the prisoners, and told his barons, with wanton insolence, that it was sufficient for them that he had saved them, by that victory, from the forfeitures and attainders which hung over them. All the officers of the crown were named by him; the whole authority, and the arms of the state, were lodged in his hands[14].

13 W. Hemingf. lib. iii.—*Chron.* Wikes.

14 Rymer, vol. i.—Hemingf.

But it was impossible that things could remain long in this equivocal situation. It became necessary for Leicester, either to descend to the rank of a subject, or mount up to that of a sovereign; and he could do neither without peril. He summoned a new parliament; which, for his own purposes, he fixed on a more democratical basis than any called since the Norman conquest, if not from the foundation of the monarchy. He ordered returns to be made not only of two knights from every shire, but also of deputies from the boroughs [15]; and thus introduced into the national council a second order of men, hitherto regarded as too mean to enjoy a place in those august assemblies, or have any share in the government of the state.

A. D. 1265.

But although we are indebted to Leicester's usurpation for the first rude outline of the House of Commons, his policy only forwarded by some years an institution for which the general state of society had already prepared the nation; and that house, though derived from so invidious an origin, soon proved, when it was summoned by legal princes, one of the most useful members of the constitution, and gradually rescued the kingdom, as we shall have occasion to see, both from aristocratical and regal tyranny. It is but just, however, to observe, that, as this necessary and now powerful branch of our constitution owed its rise to usurpation, it is the only one of the three that has latterly given an usurper to the state. The person to whom I allude is Oliver Cromwell; and I may venture to affirm, that, if ever England should be again subjected to the absolute will of any ONE man, unless from abroad, that man must be a member of the House of Commons. The people are alike jealous of the power of the king and of the nobles; but they are themselves greedy of dominion, and can only possess it through their representatives. A popular member of the lower house, therefore, needs only

15 Rymer, vol. i.

ambition, enterpise, and a favourable conjuncture, to overturn the throne; to strip the nobles of their privileges and dignities; and, while he blows the trumpet of liberty, to tell his equals that they are slaves.

Leicester's motive for giving this form to the parliament was a desire of crushing his rivals among the powerful barons; and trusting to the popularity acquired by such a measure, he ordered the earl of Derby to be accused in the king's name, and committed to prison without being brought to a legal trial. Several other barons were threatened with the same fate, and therefore deserted the confederacy. The royalists flew to arms; prince Edward made his escape from a confinement into which he had been insidiously drawn; and the joy of this young hero's appearance, together with the oppressions under which the nation laboured, soon procured him a force which Leicester was unable to resist. A battle was fought near Evesham; where

Aug. 4.

the earl was slain, and his army totally routed. When that nobleman, who possessed great military talents, observed the vast superiority in numbers, and excellent disposition of the royalists, he exclaimed, "The Lord have "mercy on our souls! for I see our bodies are prince "Edward's: he has learned from me the art of war[16]." Another particular deserves to be noticed. The old king, disguised in armour, having been placed by the rebels in the front of the battle, had received a wound, and was on the point of being put to death, when he weakly, but opportunely, cried out, "Spare my life; I am Henry of "Winchester, your king[17]!" His brave son flew to his rescue, and put him in a place of safety.

The victory of Evesham proved decisive in favour of the royal party, but was used with moderation. Although the suppression of an extensive rebellion commonly produces a revolution in government, and strengthens as well as enlarges the prerogatives of the crown, no sacrifices of na-

16 Hemingf. lib. iii. 17 Id. ibid.

tional liberty were exacted upon this occasion. The clemency of this victory is also remarkable: no blood was shed on the scaffold. The mild disposition of the king, and the prudence of the prince, tempered the insolence of power, and gradually restored order to the several members of the state.

The affairs of England being thus settled, prince Edward, seduced by a thirst of glory, undertook an expedition into the Holy Land, where he signalised himself by many acts of valour, and struck such terror into the Saracens, that they employed an assassin to murder him. The ruffian wounded Edward in the arm, but paid for his temerity with his life[18]. Meanwhile the prince's absence from England was productive of many pernicious consequences, which the old king, unequal to the burthen of government, was incapable of preventing[19]. He therefore implored his gallant son to return, and assist him in swaying that sceptre which was ready to drop from his feeble hands. Edward obeyed: but before his arrival the king expired, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-seventh of his reign, the longest in the English annals.

A. D. 1270.

Nov. 16, 1272.

The most obvious feature in the character of Henry III. is his weakness. From this source, rather than from insincerity or treachery, arose his negligence in observing his promises; and hence, for the sake of present convenience, he was easily induced to sacrifice the lasting advantages arising from the trust and confidence of his people. A better head, with the same dispositions, would have prevented him from falling into so many errors! but (every good has its allay!) with a worse heart, it would have enabled him to maintain them.

18 Hemingf.—Wikes.

19 The police was so loose during the latter part of Henry's reign, that not only single houses, but whole villages, were often pillaged by bands of robbers. *Chron. Dunst.*

Prince Edward had reached Sicily, in his return from the Holy Land, when he received intelligence of the death of his father, and immediately proceeded homeward. But a variety of objects, my dear Philip, claim your attention, before I carry farther the transactions of our own island, which now became truly important. The reign of Edward I. forms a new æra in the history of Britain.

LETTER XXXIV.

Sketch of the affairs of France, from the Death of Philip Augustus to the End of the Reign of Louis IX., with some Account of the last Crusade.

THE reign of Philip Augustus has already engaged our attention. We have had occasion to observe the great abilities of that prince, both as a warrior and a politician; we have seen him re-unite some considerable provinces to the kingdom of France at the expense of the English monarchy: we have seen him attempt the conquest of England itself: and we have also seen in what manner prince Louis was obliged to abandon that project, notwithstanding the power and the intrigues of Philip. Soon after the return of Louis, his father died, and left the kingdom of France twice as large as he had received it; so that future acquisitions became easy to his successors.

July 14, 1223.

Louis VIII., however, did not enlarge the monarchy. His short reign was chiefly spent in a crusade against the Albigenses, in the prosecution of which he died. He was succeeded by his son Louis IX., commonly called St. Louis. During the minority of this prince, various disorders arose in France, occasioned chiefly by the ambition of the powerful vassals of the crown. But all these

Nov. 8, 1226.

were happily composed by the prudence and firmness of Blanche of Castile, the regent and queen-mother.

Louis no sooner came of age than he was universally acknowledged to be the greatest prince in Europe; and his character is perhaps the most singular in the annals of history. To the mean and abject superstition of a monk he not only united all the courage and magnanimity of a hero, but (what may be deemed still more wonderful) the justice and integrity of the sincere patriot, and, where religion was not concerned, the mildness and humanity of the true philosopher. So far was he from taking advantage of the divisions among the English, during the reign of Henry III., or attempting to expel those dangerous rivals from the provinces which they still possessed in France, that he entertained many scruples in regard to the sentence of attainder pronounced against the king's father; and had not his bishops, it is said, persuaded him that John was justly punished for his barbarity and felony, he would have gladly restored the conquests of Philip Augustus[1]. A. D. 1236.

When Gregory IX., after excommunicating Frederic II., offered the empire to the count of Artois, brother of St. Louis, this pious prince acted in the same disinterested manner. He did not indeed refuse that gift as what the pope had no right to bestow; but he replied, that Frederic had always appeared to him a good catholic; that ambassadors ought first to be sent, to know his sentiments touching his faith; that, if orthodox, there could be no reason for attacking him; but, if heretical, war ought to be carried on against him with violence; and, in such case, even against the pope himself[2]. A. D. 1240.

This was the foible of Louis. Persuaded that heretics, or those who did not hold the established belief, deserved the punishment of death, he favoured the tribunal of the Inquisition; and the same turn of thinking led him to

1 Nang. *Vit. Ludovici IX.* 2 Id. ibid.

ascribe merit to a war against infidels. His humane heart became a prey to the barbarous devotion of the
A. D. 1244. times. When a dangerous illness had deprived him of his senses, and almost of his life, his heated imagination took fire, and he thought he heard a voice commanding him to shed the blood of infidels. He accordingly made a vow, as soon as he recovered, to engage in a new crusade, and immediately took the cross. Nor could any remonstrances engage him to forego his purpose: he considered his vow as a sacred and indissoluble obligation[3].

But Louis, though not to be dissuaded from his eastern expedition, was in no hurry to depart. He spent four years in making preparations, and in settling the government of his kingdom, which he left to the care of his mother; and, at length, set sail for Cyprus, accom-
A. D. 1248. panied by his queen, his three brothers, and almost all the knights of France. At Cyprus it was resolved to make a descent upon Egypt, as it was supposed that Jerusalem and the Holy Land could not be preserved while that country remained in the hands of the infidels. But before I speak of the transactions of Egypt, I must say a few words of the state of the East in those times.

Asia, my dear Philip, from the earliest ages, has been the seat of enormous monarchy, and the theatre of the most astonishing revolutions. You have seen with what rapidity it was over-run by the Arabs, and afterwards by the Turks; you have seen those conquering people, for a time, borne down by the champions of the cross, and Saladin himself sink beneath the arm of our illustrious Richard. But neither the zeal of the Christians, nor the enthusiasm of the Mohammedans, seem to have proved so successful as the hardy valour of the Moguls, or Western Tartars, under Genghiz-Khan, who, in a few years, reduced Persia, and pushed his conquests as far as the Euphrates; subdued a

3 Joinville, *Hist. de St. Louis.*

part of Hindostan and of China; all Tartary, and the frontier provinces of Russia.

This wonderful man died in 1227, when he was preparing to complete the conquest of China. His empire was divided among his four sons, whose names it is unnecessary here to mention. Houlakou, one of his grandsons, passed the Euphrates, and put an end to the long declining dominion of the khalifs of Bagdad. Another prince of his family carried terror into Poland and Hungary, and to the very gates of Constantinople[4].

These Western Tartars, accustomed from their birth to brave hunger, fatigue, and death, were irresistible, while they preserved their savage austerity of manners. The offspring of the same deserts which had produced the Huns and the Turks, they were more fierce than either; and as the Goths had formerly seised Thrace, when expelled by the Huns from their native habitations, the Kowarasmians, in like manner, flying before the Moguls, over-ran Syria and Palestine, and made themselves masters of Jerusalem in 1244, putting the inhabitants to the sword. The Christians, however, still possessed Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, and Ptolemais; and, though generally divided among themselves, they united in imploring the assistance of Europe against this danger.

Such was the situation of the East, and of the Oriental Christians, when St. Louis set out for their relief. But instead of sailing immediately for Palestine, he made a descent upon Egypt. As the sovereign of that territory was not now in possession of Jerusalem, this invasion must have proceeded from the king's ignorance of the affairs of the East, or from an ambition of conquering so fine a country, rather than from any hope of advancing the interest of Christianity.

Louis and his army landed near the city of Damietta; which, contrary to all expectation, was A.D. 1249.

4 Vie de Genghiz-Can, par P. de la Croix.—*Mod. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. fol. edit.

abandoned to them. He afterwards received fresh succours from France; and found himself in the plains of Egypt at the head of sixty thousand men, the flower of his kingdom, by whom he was both obeyed and loved. What might not have been expected from such a force, under such a general! Not only Egypt, but Syria, should have yielded to their arms. Yet this crusade, like all the rest, terminated in sorrow and disappointment. One half of these fine troops fell a prey to sickness and debauchery;
A. D. 1250. the other part was defeated by the soltan, at Massoura; where Louis beheld his brother Robert of Artois killed by his side, and himself taken prisoner with his two other brothers, the counts of Anjou and Poictiers, and all his nobility[5].

The French, however, were still in possession of Damietta. There the queen was lödged: and thinking her safety doubtful, as the place was besieged, she addressed herself to the Sieur Joinville, a venerable knight, and made him promise, on the faith of chivalry, to cut off her head, if ever her virtue should be in danger. "Most readily," answered Joinville, in the true spirit of the times, "will "I perform at your request what I thought indeed to do "of myself, should misfortune make it necessary." But he had happily no occasion to put his promise into execution. Damietta held out, and a treaty was concluded with the soltan; by which that city was restored, in consideration of the king's liberty, and a thousand pieces of gold paid for the ransom of the other prisoners[6].

Louis was now solicited to return to Europe with the remnant of his fleet and army, but devotion led him to Palestine; where he continued above three years, without effecting any thing of consequence. In the mean time the affairs of France were in great confusion. The queen-mother, during the king's captivity, had unadvisedly given per-

5 Joinville, *Hist. de St. Louis*. 6 Id. ibid.

mission to a fanatical monk to preach a new crusade for her son's release; and this man, availing himself of the pastoral circumstances in the Nativity, assembled near one hundred thousand people of low condition, whom he called shepherds. It soon appeared, however, that they might with more propriety have been styled wolves. They robbed and pillaged wherever they came; and it was found necessary to disperse them by force of arms. Nor was that effected without much trouble[7]. A.D. 1251.

The death of the queen-mother determined Louis, at last, to revisit France. But he only returned in order to prepare for a new crusade; so strongly had that madness infected his mind!—Meanwhile his zeal for justice, his care to reform abuses, his wise laws, his virtuous example, soon repaired the evils occasioned by his absence. He established, on a solid foundation, the right of appeal to the royal judges, one of the best expedients for reducing the exorbitant power of the nobles. He absolutely prohibited private wars, which the feudal anarchy had tolerated: he substituted juridical proofs, instead of those by duel; and, no less enlightened than pious, he rescued France from the exactions of the court of Rome. A.D. 1254.

In his transactions with his neighbours, he was alike exemplary. Equity and disinterestedness formed the basis of his policy. If he sometimes carried those virtues too far, as a prince, they always did him honour as a man: they even procured him respect as a sovereign; and secured to his subjects the greatest blessings that a people can enjoy—peace and prosperity. He ceded to James I. of Arragon his incontestable right to Roussillon and Catalonia, which had been subject to France from the time of Charle-magne, in exchange for certain claims of that monarch to some fiefs in Provence and Languedoc; and he restored to the English crown Querci, Perigord, and the A. D. 1259.

7 Fontenay, *Hist. de l'Eglise Gallic.* tome xi.—Boulay, *Hist. Acad.* Parisiensis, vol. iii.

Limosin, for no higher consideration than that the king of England should renounce all right to Normandy, Maine, and the other forfeited provinces, which were already in the possession of France. But Louis, as has been observed, was doubtful of the right by which he held those provinces. And although an ambitious prince, instead of making this compromise, might have taken advantage of the troubles of England under Henry III., to seise Guienne, and all that remained to that monarchy in France; such a prince might also, by these means, have drawn on himself the jealousy of his neighbours, and in the end have fallen a sacrifice to his rapacity; whereas Louis, by his moderation, acquired the confidence of all Europe, and was chosen arbiter between the king of England and his barons, at a time when it was his interest to have ruined both; an honour never conferred upon any other rival monarch, and with which, perhaps, no other could ever safely have been trusted. He determined in favour of the king without prejudice to the people; he annulled the Provisions of Oxford, as derogatory to the rights of the crown, but enforced the observance of the Great Charter. And although this sentence was rejected by Leicester and his party, it will remain an eternal monument of the equity of Louis[8].

A. D. 1264.

The most reprehensible circumstance in this great monarch's conduct, and perhaps the only one that deserves to be considered in that light, was his approbation of the treaty between his brother and the pope, relative to Sicily. When that kingdom was offered to the count of Anjou, he accepted it; and Louis permitted a crusade to be preached in France against Mainfroy, who had now actually usurped the Sicilian throne, in prejudice of his nephew Conradin. The count of Anjou marched into Italy at the head of a numerous army. Mainfroy was defeated and slain in the plains of Benevento, and Conradin appear-

A. D. 1266.

8 Rymer, vol. i.—*Chron.* Wikes.—*Chron. Dunst.*

ed in vindication of his native rights. He also was routed, and taken prisoner, together with his uncle, the duke of Austria; and both were executed at Naples, upon a scaffold, at the request of the pope, and by the sentence of a pretended court of justice[9]; an indignity not hitherto offered to a crowned head. A. D. 1268.

In consequence of the revolution that followed this barbarity, by which Charles, count of Anjou, established himself on the Sicilian throne, the ancient rights of that island were annihilated, and it fell entirely under the jurisdiction of the pope. Meanwhile St. Louis, who, either out of respect to his holiness, or complaisance to his brother, thus beheld with indifference the liberties of mankind sacrificed, and the blood of princes unjustly shed, was preparing to lead a new army against the infidels. He hoped to make a convert of the king of Tunis; and, for that purpose, landed on the coast of Africa, sword in hand, at the head of his troops. But the Tunisine prince refused to embrace Christianity: the French troops were seised with an epidemical distemper; of which Louis beheld one of his sons expire, and another at the point of death, when he himself caught the infection, and died in the fifty-sixth year of his age. His son and successor, Philip, recovered; kept the field against the Moors; and saved the remains of the French army, which procured him the name of the Hardy[10]. But the reign of this prince must not at present engage our attention; we must return to the affairs of Spain, which had still little connexion with the rest of Europe, but was gradually rising into consequence. Aug. 25, 1270.

9 Giannone, *Hist. di Nap.*
10 Joinville, ubi sup.—Mezeray, vol. iii.

LETTER XXXV.

A Survey of the Transactions in Spain, from the Middle of the Eleventh to the End of the Thirteenth Century.

WE left Spain, my dear Philip, towards the middle of the eleventh century, dismembered by the Moors and Christians, and both nations harassed by civil wars. About that time Ferdinand, son of Sancho the Great, king of Navarre and Arragon, united to his dominions Old Castile, together with the kingdom of Leon, which he took from his brother-in-law Veremond, whom he slew in battle. Castile then became a kingdom, and Leon one of its provinces[1].

A. D. 1036.

In the reign of the son of this Ferdinand flourished Don Roderigo, surnamed the Cid, who actually married Chimene, whose father he had murdered. They who know nothing of this history, but from the celebrated tragedy written by Corneille, suppose that Ferdinand was in possession of Andalusia. The Cid began his famous exploits by assisting Sancho, Ferdinand's eldest son, to deprive his brothers and sisters of the inheritance left to them by their father; but the death of Sancho, in one of these unjust expeditions, secured the observance of Ferdinand's will.

A. D. 1072.

A short digression will be here necessary. Besides the many kings at this time in Spain, who nearly amounted to the number of twenty, there were many independent lords, who came on horseback completely armed, and followed by several esquires, to offer their services to the princes and princesses engaged in war. The princes with whom these

1 Mariana, de Rebus Hispaniæ, lib. ix.

lords engaged girded them with a belt, and presented them with a sword, with which they gave them a slight blow on the shoulder; and hence the origin of knights-errant, and of the number of single combats, which so long desolated Spain.

One of the most celebrated of these combats was fought after the murder of that king Sancho, whose death I have just mentioned, and who was assassinated while he was besieging his sister Urraca in the city of Zamora. Three knights maintained the honour of the infanta against Don Diego de Lara, who had accused her. Don Diego overthrew and killed two of the infanta's knights: the horse of the third, having the reins of his bridle cut, carried his master out of the lists; and the combat was declared undecided.

Of all the Spanish knights, the Cid distinguished himself most eminently against the Moors. Several knights ranged themselves under his banner; and these, with their esquires and horsemen, composed an army covered with iron, and mounted on the most beautiful steeds in the country. With this force he overcame several Moorish kings; and having fortified the city of Alcassar, he there erected a petty sovereignty.

But of the various enterprises in which the Cid and his followers were engaged, the most gallant was the siege of Toledo, which his master Alphonso VI., king of Old Castile, undertook against the Moors. The fame of this siege, and the Cid's reputation, drew many knights and princes from France and Italy; particularly Raymond, count of Toulouse, and two princes of the blood-royal of France, of the branch of Burgundy. The Moorish king, named Hiaya, was the son of Al-mamoun, one of the most generous princes mentioned in history, who had afforded an asylum, in this very city, to Alphonso, when persecuted by his brother Sancho. They had lived together for a long time in strict friendship; and Al-mamoun

A. D. 1084.

was so far from detaining Alphonso, when he became king by the death of Sancho, that he gave him part of his treasures, and they shed tears, it is said, at parting. But the spirit of those times made every thing seem lawful against infidels, and even meritorious. Several Moorish chiefs went out of the city to reproach Alphonso with his ingratitude, and many remarkable combats were fought under the walls.

When the siege had continued a whole year, Toledo capitulated, on condition that the Moors should enjoy their religion and laws, and suffer no injury in their persons or property[2]. All new Castile, in a short time, yielded to the Cid, who took possession of it in the name of Alphonso; and Madrid, a small place, which was one day to become the capital of Spain, fell into the hands of the Christians.

A.D. 1085.

Immediately after the reduction of Toledo, Alphonso called an assembly of bishops, who, without the concurrence of the people, formerly thought necessary, promoted a priest named Bernard to the bishopric of that city; and pope Urban II., at the king's request, made him primate of Spain. The king and the pope were also anxious to establish the Romish liturgy and ritual in place of the Gothic, or Mosarabic, hitherto in use. The Spaniards contended zealously for the ritual of their ancestors: the pope urged them to receive that to which he had given his infallible sanction: a violent contest arose; and to the disgrace of human reason, a religious opinion was referred to the decision of the sword. Two knights accordingly entered the lists in complete armour. The Mosarabic champion was victorious; but the king and the archbishop had sufficient influence to procure a new trial, though contrary to all the laws of combat. The next appeal was to God by fire. A fire being prepared for that purpose, a copy of each liturgy was cast into the flames. The fire, we may

2 Rod. Tolet. *de Reb. Hisp.*—Mariana, ubi sup.—Ferreras, *Hist. de Espana.*

suppose, respected neither; but authority prevailed. The Romish liturgy was ordered to be received, yet some churches were permitted to retain the Mosarabic [3]. A. D. 1087.

Alphonso, either from policy or inclination, augmented the dominions which he had acquired through the valour of the Cid, by marrying Zaid, daughter of Ebn-Abad, the Mohammedan king of Seville, with whom he received several towns in dowry: and he is reproached with having, in conjunction with his father-in-law, invited the sovereign of Morocco into Spain. But be that as it may, the *Emir-al-Moumenin* came; and, instead of assisting the king of Seville in reducing the petty Moorish princes, he turned his arms against him, took the city of Seville, and became a dangerous neighbour to Alphonso[4]. A. D. 1097.

In the mean time the Cid, at the head of his army of knights, subdued the kingdom of Valentia. Few kings in Spain were, at that time, so powerful as he; yet he never assumed the regal title, but continued faithful to his master Alphonso, while he governed Valentia with the authority of a sovereign. After his death, which happened in 1096, the kings of Castile and Arragon continued their wars against the infidels; and Spain was more drenched in blood than ever, and more desolated.

Alphonso, surnamed the Battle-giver, king of Navarre and Arragon, took Saragossa from the Moors; and that city, which afterwards became the capital of the kingdom of Arragon, was never again subjected to the dominion of the infidels. He was continually at war either with the Christians or Mohammedans; and the latter gained a complete victory over him, which mortified him so much, that he died of chagrin, leaving his kingdom by will to the Knights Templars. This was bequeathing a civil war as his last legacy. The tes- A. D. 1118. A. D. 1134.

3 Rod. Tolet. *de Reb. Hisp.*—Mariana, ubi sup.—Ferreras, *Hist. de Espana.*
4 Id. ibid.

tament was esteemed valid; but fortunately these knights were not in a condition to enforce it; and the states of Arragon chose for their king Ramiro, brother to the deceased prince. He had led a monastic life for upwards of forty years, and proved incapable of governing. The people of Navarre therefore chose another king, descended from their ancient monarchs; and, by this division, both these states became a prey to the Moors. They were saved by the timely assistance of Alphonso VIII., king of Castile, who had obtained many victories over the infidels, and in return for his protection received the city of Saragossa from the Arragonese, and the homage of the king of Navarre. This success so much elated Alphonso, that he assumed the title of Emperor of Spain [5].

Alphonso Henriquez, count of Portugal, received about this time the title of king from his soldiers, after a victory obtained over the Moors; and he took Lisbon from them by the assistance of an army of crusards, who had been driven up the Tagus by tempestuous weather. On A. D. 1147. this occasion, pope Alexander III., steady to the policy of his predecessors, took advantage of the papal maxim, that all countries conquered from the infidels belong to the holy see, to assert his superiority over Portugal; and Alphonso politically allowed him an an- A. D. 1179. nual tribute of two marks of gold, on receiving a bull from Rome confirming his regal dignity and his infallible right to that territory [6].

A very few efforts would now have been sufficient to have driven the Moors entirely out of Spain: but for that purpose it was necessary that the Spanish Christians should be united among themselves, whereas they were A. D. 1211. engaged in almost perpetual wars one with another. They united, however, at length, from a sense of common danger, and also implored the assistance of the other Christian princes of Europe.

5 Rod. Tolet *de Reb. Hisp.*

6 Neufville, *Hist. Gen. de Port.*

Mohammed Al-naser, the Emir-al-Moumenin, having crossed the sea with an army of near one hundred thousand men, and being joined by the Moors in Andalusia, assured himself of making an entire conquest of Spain. The rumour of this great armament roused the attention of the whole European continent. Many adventurers came from all quarters. To these the kings of Castile, Arragon, and Navarre, united their forces: the kingdom of Portugal also furnished a body of troops; and the Christian and Mohammedan armies met in the defiles of the Black mountain, on Sierra Morena, on the borders of Andalusia, and in the province of Toledo. Alphonso IX., king of Castile, commanded the centre of the Christian army: the archbishop of Toledo carried the cross before him. The African prince occupied the same place in the Moorish army: he was dressed in a rich robe, with the Koran in one hand, and a sabre in the other. The battle was long and obstinately disputed, but at length the Christians prevailed[7]: and the sixteenth of July, the day on which the victory was gained, is still celebrated in Toledo. A. D. 1212.

The consequences of this victory, however, were not so great as might have been expected. The Moors of Andalusia were strengthened by the remains of the African army, while that of the Christians was immediately dispersed. Almost all the knights who had been present at the battle returned to their respective homes as soon as it was over. But although the Christians seemed thus to neglect their true interest, by allowing the Mohammedans time to recruit themselves, the Moors employed that time more to their own hurt than the Christians could if united against them. All the Moorish states, both in Spain and Africa, were rent in pieces by civil dissensions, and a variety of new sovereigns sprang up, which entirely broke the power of the infidels.

7 Rod. Tolet. *de Reb. Hisp.*

The period seemed therefore arrived, to use the language of that haughty and superstitious nation, marked out by Heaven for the glory of Spain, and the expulsion of the Moors. Ferdinand III., styled by his countrymen
A. D. 1236. St. Ferdinand, took from the infidels the famous city of Cordova, the residence of the first Moorish kings; and James I. of Arragon dispossessed them of the
A. D. 1238. island of Majorca, and drove them out of the fine kingdom of Valentia. St. Ferdinand also subdued the province of Murcia, and made himself master of Se-
A. D. 1248. ville, the most opulent city belonging to the Moors[8]. Death at length put an end to his conquests: and if divine honours are due to those who have
A. D. 1252. been the deliverers of their country, Spain justly reverences the name of Ferdinand III.

Alphonso, surnamed the Astronomer, or the Wise, the son of St. Ferdinand, likewise exalted the glory of Spain; but in a manner very different from that of his father. This prince, who rivaled the Arabians in the sciences, digested the celebrated Spanish code, called *Las Partidas*; and under his inspection those astronomical tables were drawn up, which still bear his name, and do honour to his memory. In his old age he saw his son Sancho rebel against him, and was reduced to the disagreeable necessity of leaguing with the Moors against his own blood, and his
A. D. 1283. rebellious Christian subjects. This was not the first alliance which Christians had formed with infidels against Christians; but it was certainly the most excusable.

Alphonso invited to his assistance the Emir-al-Moumenin, who immediately crossed the sea; and the two monarchs met at Zara, on the confines of Granada. The behaviour and speech of the Moorish prince, on this occasion, deserve to be recorded. He gave the place of honour to Alphonso at meeting: "I treat you thus," said

8 Rod. Tolet, *de Reb. Hisp.*

he, "because you are unfortunate; and enter into an al- "liance with you to support the common cause of all "kings and all fathers [9]."

The rebels were vanquished; but the good old king died before he had time to enjoy the fruits of his victory: and, the Emir-al-Moumenin being obliged to return to Africa, the unnatural Sancho succeeded to the crown in prejudice to the offspring of a former marriage.

A. D. 1284.

He even reigned happily; and his son Ferdinand IV. was not unsuccessful against the Moors.

This Ferdinand is called by the Spanish historians the Summoned; and the reason assigned for it is somewhat remarkable. When he had ordered two noblemen, in a fit of anger, to be thrown from the top of a rock, they summoned him to appear in the presence of God within a month; at the end of which he died [10]. It is to be wished, as Voltaire very justly observes, that this story were true, or at least believed to be so by all princes who think they have a right to follow their own imperious wills at the expense of the lives of their fellow-creatures.

A. D. 1312.

These are the circumstances most worthy of notice in the history of Spain during the period here examined. We must now take a view of the progress of society.

9 Ferreras et Mariana, ubi supra.

10 Ferreras, *Hist. Espana.*

LETTER XXXVI.

Of the Progress of Society in Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, seen letters begin to revive, and manners to soften, about the middle of the eleventh century. But the progress of refinement was

slow during the two succeeding centuries, and often altogether obstructed by monastic austerities, theological disputes, ecclesiastical broils, and the disorders of the feudal anarchy. Society, however, made many beneficial advances before the close of this period. These I shall endeavour distinctly to trace.

The influence of the spirit of chivalry on manners, as we have seen, was great and singular: it enlarged the generosities of the human heart, and soothed its ferocity. But, being unhappily blended with superstition, it became itself the means of violence; armed one half of the species against the other, and precipitated Europe upon Asia. I allude to the crusades. Yet these romantic expeditions, though barbarous and destructive in themselves, were followed by some important consequences, equally conducive to the welfare of the community and of the individual. The crusards being taken under the immediate protection of the church, and its heaviest anathemas denounced against all who should molest their persons or their property, private hostilities were for a time suspended or extinguished: the feudal sovereigns became more powerful, and their vassals less turbulent; a more steady administration of justice was introduced, and some advances were made towards regular government.

The commercial effects of the crusades were no less considerable than their political influence. Many ships were necessary to transport the prodigious armies which Europe poured forth, and also to supply them with provisions. These ships were principally furnished by the Venetians, the Pisans, and the Genoese; who acquired, by that service, immense sums of money, and opened to themselves, at the same time, a new source of wealth, by importing into Europe the commodities of Asia. A taste for these commodities became general. The Italian cities grew rich and powerful, and obtained extensive privileges. Some of them erected themselves into sovereignties, others into corpora-

tions or independent communities[1]; and the establishment of those communities may be considered as the first great step towards civilisation in modern Europe.

This subject requires your particular attention. The feudal government, as I have had occasion to observe, had degenerated into a system of oppression. Not only the inhabitants of the country, but even whole cities and villages, held of some great lord, on whom they depended for protection; and the citizens were not less subject to his arbitrary jurisdiction than those who were employed in cultivating the estates of their masters. Services of various kinds, equally disgraceful and oppressive, were exacted from them without mercy or moderation: and they were deprived of the most natural and unalienable rights of humanity. They could not dispose of their effects by will, appoint guardians to their children, or even marry, without the consent of their superior lord[2].

As men in such a condition had few motives to industry, we find all the cities of Europe, before their enfranchisement, equally poor and wretched. But no sooner were they formed into bodies politic, governed by magistrates chosen from among their own members, than the spirit of industry revived, and commerce began to flourish. Population increased with independence; the conveniences of life with the means of procuring them: property gave birth to statutes and regulations; a sense of common interest enforced them; and the more frequent occasions of intercourse among men and kingdoms gradually led to a greater refinement in manners, and tended to wear off those national and local prejudices which created dissension and animosity between the inhabitants of different states and provinces.

The mode in which these immunities were obtained,

1 Murat. *Antiq. Ital.* vol. ii.

2 *Ordon. des Rois de France*, tome i.—D'Ach. Spicileg. vol. xi.—Murat. *Antiquit. Ital.* vol. iv.

varied in the different kingdoms of Europe. Some of the Italian cities acquired their freedom by arms, others by money; and in France and Germany many of the great barons were glad to sell charters of liberty to the towns within their jurisdiction, in order to repair the expense incurred by the crusades. The sovereigns also granted, or sold, similar privileges to the towns within the royal domain, with a view of creating some power that might counter-balance their potent vassals, who often gave law to the crown[3]. The practice quickly spread over Europe; and before the end of the thirteenth century its beneficial effects were generally felt.

These effects were no less extensive upon government than upon manners. Self-preservation had obliged every man, during several centuries, to court the patronage of some powerful baron, whose castle was the common asylum in times of danger; but towns surrounded with walls, and filled with citizens trained to arms, bound by interest as well as the most solemn engagements to protect each other, afforded a more commodious and secure retreat. The nobles became of less importance, when they ceased to be the sole guardians of the people; and the crown acquired an increase of power and consequence, when it no longer depended entirely upon its great vassals for the supply of its armies. The cities contributed liberally towards the support of the royal authority, as they deemed the sovereigns the authors of their liberty, and their protectors against the domineering spirit of the nobles. Hence flowed another consequence of corporation charters.

The inhabitants of cities having obtained personal freedom, and municipal jurisdiction, soon aspired to civil liberty and political power. And the sovereigns, in most kingdoms, found it necessary to admit them to a share in the legislature, on account of their utility in raising the supplies for govern-

3 Du Cange, voc. *Communia.*

ment; it being a fundamental principle in the feudal policy, that no free man could be taxed but with his own consent. The citizens were now free; and the wealth, power, and consequence, which they acquired on recovering their liberty, added weight to their claim to political eminence, and seemed to mark them out as an essential branch in the constitution. They had it much in their power to supply the exigencies of the crown, and also to repress the encroachment of the nobles. In England, Germany, and even in France, where the voice of liberty is heard no more, the representatives of communities accordingly obtained, by different means, a place in the national council, as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century[4].

Thus, my dear Philip, an intermediate power was established between the king and nobles, to which each had recourse alternately, and which sometimes opposed the one and sometimes the other. It tempered the rigour of aristocratical oppression with a mixture of popular liberty, while it restrained the usurpations of the crown: it secured to the great body of the people, who had formerly no representatives, active and powerful guardians of their rights and liberties; and it entirely changed the spirit of the laws, by introducing into the statutes and the jurisprudence of the European nations ideas of equality, order, and public good.

To this new power the villains or slaves, who resided in the country and were employed in agriculture, looked up for freedom. They obtained it, though contrary to the spirit of the feudal polity. The odious names of master and slave were abolished. The husbandman became farmer of the same fields which he had been compelled to cultivate for the benefit of another. He reaped a share of the fruits of his

4 M. l'Abbé Mably, *Observat. sur l'Hist. de France*, tome ii.—Henault, tome i.—Pfeffel, *Abregé de l'Hist. du Droit d'Allemagne.*—Brady's *Treatise of Boroughs.*—Madox, *Firma Burgi.*

own industry. New prospects opened, new incitements were offered to ingenuity and enterprise. The activity of genius was awakened; and a numerous class of men, who formerly had no political existence, were restored to society, and augmented the force and riches of the state.

The second great advance which society made, during the period under review, was an approach towards a more regular administration of justice. The barbarous nations who over-ran the Roman empire, and settled in its provinces, rejected the Roman jurisprudence with the same contempt with which they spurned the Roman arts. Both respected objects of which they had no conception, and were adapted to a state of society with which they were then unacquainted. But as civilisation advanced, they became sensible of the imperfection of their own institutions, and even of their absurdity. Trials by ordeal and by duel were abolished in most countries before the close of the thirteenth century, and various attempts were made to restrain the practice of private war; one of the greatest abuses in the feudal polity, and which struck at the foundation of all government.

As the authority of the civil magistrates was found ineffectual to remedy this evil, the church interposed; and various regulations were published, in order to set bounds to private hostilities. But these all proving insufficient, supernatural means were employed: a letter was sent from heaven to a bishop of Aquitaine, commanding men to cease from violence, and be reconciled to each other. This revelation was published during a season of public calamity, when men were willing to perform any thing in order to avert the wrath of an offended God. A general reconciliation took place: and a resolution was formed, that no man should in future attack or molest his adversaries during the seasons appropriated for the celebration of the great festivals of the church, or from the end of Thursday in each week to the beginning of Mon-

day in the week ensuing: the three intervening days being considered as particularly holy, Christ's passion having happened on one of those days, and his resurrection on another. This cessation from hostilities was called "The Truce of God;" and three complete days, in every week, allowed such a considerable space for the passions of the antagonists to cool, and for the people to enjoy a respite from the calamities of war, as well as to take measures for their own security, that, if the Truce of God had been strictly observed, it would have gone far towards putting an end to private wars. That, however, was not the case; the nobles prosecuted their quarrels, as formerly, till towards the end of the twelfth century, when a carpenter of Guienne gave out, that Jesus Christ had appeared to him, and, having commanded him to exhort mankind to peace, had given him, as a proof of his mission, an image of the Virgin holding her son in her arms, with this inscription: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, "give us peace!" This low fanatic was received as an inspired messenger of Heaven. Many prelates and barons assembled at Puy, and took an oath, not only to make peace with all their own enemies, but to attack such as refused to lay down their arms and to be reconciled to their adversaries. They formed an association for that purpose, and assumed the honourable name of "The Brotherhood of God." Associations of the same kind were formed in other countries; and these, together with civil prohibitions, enforced by royal power, contributed to remove this pernicious evil[5].

When society was thus emerging from barbarism, and men were become sensible of the necessity of order, a copy of Justinian's Pandects was discovered at Amalphi, in Italy; and although the age had still too little taste to relish the beauty of the Roman classics, it immediately perceived the merit of a system of laws, in which all the points most

5 Du Cange, *Gloss.* voc. Treuga.—Du Mont, *Corps Diplomatique*, tome i.—Robertson's Introd. *Hist. Charles V.* sect. i.—Hume's *Hist. England*, Append. i.

interesting to mankind were settled with precision, discernment, and equity. All men of letters were struck with admiration at the wisdom of the ancients: the code of Justinian was studied with eagerness: and professors of civil law were appointed, who taught this new science in most countries of Europe.

The effects of studying and imitating so perfect a model were, as might be expected, great. Fixed and general laws were established; the principles and the forms by which judges should regulate their decisions were ascertained; the feudal law was reduced into a regular system; the canon law was methodised; the loose uncertain customs of different provinces or kingdoms were collected and arranged with order and accuracy. And these improvements in the system of jurisprudence had an extensive influence upon society. They gave rise to a distinction of professions.

Among rude nations no profession is honourable but that of arms; and, as the functions of peace are few and simple, war is the only study. Such had been the state of Europe during several centuries. But when law became a science, the knowledge of which required a regular course of studies and long attention to the practice of courts, a new order of men naturally acquired consideration and influence in society. Another profession beside that of arms was introduced, and reputed honourable among the laity: the talents requisite for discharging it were cultivated; the arts and virtues of peace were placed in their proper rank; and the people of Europe became accustomed to see men rise to eminence by civil as well as military employment[6].

The study of the Roman law had also a considerable influence upon letters. The knowledge of a variety of sciences became necessary, in order to expound with judgement the civil code; and the same passion which impelled men to prosecute the juridical science with so much ardour, ren-

6 Montesquieu, *l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxviii.—Hume.—Robertson.

dered them anxious to excel in every branch of literature. Colleges and universities were founded; a regular course of study was planned, and a regular set of professors established. Privileges of great value were conferred upon masters and scholars; academical titles and honours were invented, as rewards for the different degrees of literary eminence; and an incredible number of students, allured by these advantages, resorted to the new seats of learning.

But a false taste unhappily infected all those seminaries; for which a learned and inquisitive writer thus ingeniously accounts. Most of the persons who attempted to revive literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had received instruction, and derived their principles of science, from the Greeks in the Eastern empire, or the Arabs in Spain and Africa. Both those people, acute and inquisitive to excess, corrupted the sciences which they cultivated. The Greeks rendered theology a system of speculative refinement, or endless controversy; and the Arabs communicated to philosophy a spirit of metaphysical and frivolous subtilty. Misled by these guides, the persons who first applied to science were involved in a maze of intricate inquiries. Instead of allowing their fancy to take its natural range, and produce such works of elegant invention as might have improved the taste and refined the sentiments of the age; instead of cultivating those arts which embellish human life, and render it delightful; they spent the whole force of their genius in speculations as unavailing as they were difficult[7].

But, fruitless and ill-directed as these speculations were, their novelty roused, and their boldness engaged, the human mind; and although science was further circumscribed in its influence, and prevented during several ages from diffusing itself through society, by being delivered in the Latin tongue, its progress deserves to be

7 Robertson's *Introduct.* sect. i.

mentioned, as one of the great causes which contributed to introduce a change of manners into modern Europe. That ardent though mistaken spirit of inquiry which prevailed gave a *stimulus* to ingenuity and invention: it led men to a new employment of their faculties, which they found to be agreeable as well as interesting; it accustomed them to exercises and occupations that tended to soften their manners, and to give them some relish for those gentle virtues which are peculiar to nations among whom science has been cultivated with success.

Some ages indeed elapsed before taste, order, and politeness, were restored to society: but anarchy and barbarism gradually disappeared with ignorance; the evils of life, with its crimes; and public and private happiness began to be better understood; until Europe (wisely governed) attained the enjoyment of all those advantages, pleasures, amusements, and tender sympathies, which are necessary to alleviate the pains inseparable from existence, and sooth the sorrows allied to humanity.

LETTER XXXVII.

History of England during the Reign of Edward I. with an Introduction to that of Scotland, and some Account of the Conquest of that Country by the English, as well as of the final Reduction of Wales.

THE reign of Edward I., my dear Philip, as I have already observed, forms a new æra in the history of Britain. I must now make you sensible what entitles it to that distinction.

As soon as Edward returned to England (where his au-

thority was firmly established, by his high character both at home and abroad), he applied himself A.D. 1274. assiduously to the correction of those disorders which the civil commotions, and the loose administration of his father, had introduced into every part of government. By an exact distribution of justice, and a rigid execution of the laws, he at once gave protection to the inferior orders of the state, and diminished the arbitrary power of the nobles. He made it a rule in his own conduct to observe, except upon extraordinary occasions, the privileges secured to the barons by the Great Charter; and he insisted on their observance of the same charter towards their vassals. He took measures for attracting reverence to the crown as the grand fountain of justice, and the general asylum against violence and oppression. By these judicious proceedings, the state of the kingdom was soon wholly changed: order and tranquillity were restored to society, and vigour to government [1].

Now it was that the enterprising spirit of Edward began more remarkably to show itself. He undertook an expediton against Llewellyn prince of Wales, A.D. 1277. who had formerly joined the rebellious barons, and whose two brothers, David and Roderic, had fled to Edward for protection, craving his assistance to recover their possessions, and seconding his attempts to enslave their native country.

The Welshprince had no resource against the superior force of Edward but the inaccessible situation of his mountains, which had protected his forefathers against all the attempts of the Saxon and Norman conquerors. He accordingly retired with the bravest of his subjects among the hills of Snowdon. But Edward, no less vigorous than cautious, pierced into the heart of the country, and approached the Welsh army in its last retreat. Having

1 M. Westm.—T. Walsingh. *Hist. Irev.*

carefully secured every pass behind him, he avoided putting to trial the valour of a nation proud of its ancient independence. He was willing to trust to the more slow but sure effects of famine for success; and Llewellyn was at length obliged to submit, and receive the terms imposed upon him by the English monarch [2].

These terms were ill observed by the victors, who oppressed and insulted the inhabitants of the districts which were yielded to them. The indignation of the Welsh was roused: they flew to arms: and Edward again entered Wales with an army, not displeased with the occasion of making his conquest final. This army he committed to the command of Roger Mortimer, while he himself waited the event in the castle of Rhudlan; and Llewellyn, having ventured to leave his fastnesses, was defeated by Mortimer, and slain, with two thousand of his followers. All the Welsh nobility submitted to Edward, and the laws of England were established in the principality [3].

A. D. 1282.

In order to preserve his conquest, Edward had recourse to a barbarous policy. He ordered David, brother to Llewellyn, and his successor in the principality of Wales, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, as a traitor, for taking arms in defence of his native country, which he had once unhappily deserted, and for mantaining by force his own hereditary authority. He also ordered all the Welsh bards to be put to death; from a belief, and no absurd one, that he should more easily subdue the independent spirit of the people, when their minds ceased to be roused by the ideas of military valour and ancient glory, preserved in the traditional poems of those minstrels, and recited or sung by them on all public occasions and days of festivity [4].

A. D. 1283.

Edward's conduct in regard to Scotland, at which his ambition now pointed, is little more excusable. But some

2 *Chron.* Wikes. 3 T. Wals.—*Annal. Wave.*—Powel's *Hist. Wales.*
4 Sir J. Wynne.

points must be premised, my dear Philip, before I proceed to his transactions with that country.

After the final departure of the Romans from this island, the Scots, who had colonised some of its northern districts, were driven to Ireland by the Picts: but, about the beginning of the sixth century, Fergus, and Lorn, two enterprising brothers, emigrated with an army from their Hibernian settlements, and erected a kingdom in Argyleshire and the neighbouring territories. Wars were occasionally carried on between the successors of Fergus and the Pictish kings, till Kenneth the Scot, either by inheritance or by conquest, united into one monarchy the whole country at present known by the name of North-Britain. The Scots thenceforth became more formidable; and, having less business on their hands at home, were always ready to join the English malcontents, and made frequent incursions into the bordering counties. In one of these inroads, William king of Scotland was taken prisoner; and Henry II., as the price of his liberty, not only extorted from him an exorbitant ransom, and a promise to surrender the places of greatest strength in his dominions, but compelled him to do homage for his whole kingdom. Richard I., a more generous but less politic prince than his father, solemnly renounced his claim of homage, and absolved William from the other severe conditions which Henry had imposed. The crown of Scotland was therefore again independent; and the northern potentate only did homage for the fiefs which he enjoyed in England, (a circumstance which has occasioned various mistakes and much dispute among historians) in the same manner as the king of England himself swore fealty to the French monarch, for the fiefs which he inherited in France. But on the death of Alexander III., above a century after the captivity of William, Edward I., availing himself of the situation of affairs in Scotland, revived A.D. 1286.

the claim of sovereignty which had been renounced by Richard [5].

This is the real state of the controversy concerning the independence of Scotland which took its rise about this time, and in the following manner. As Alexander left no male issue, nor any descendant except Margaret of Norway, his grand-daughter, who did not long survive him, the right of succession belonged to the descendants of David earl of Huntingdon, third son of king David I. Of that line, two illustrious competitors for the crown appeared: Robert Bruce, son of Isabel, earl David's second daughter; and John Baliol, grandson of Margaret, the eldest daughter. According to the rules of succession now established, Baliol's right was preferable: he would succeed as the representative of his mother and grandmother; and Bruce's plea of being one degree nearer the common stock would be disregarded. But in that age the question appeared no less intricate than important: the sentiments of men were divided: each claim was supported by a powerful faction; and arms alone, it was feared, must terminate a dispute too weighty for the laws to decide.

In this critical situation the parliament of Scotland, in order to avoid the miseries of civil war, embraced the dangerous resolution of appealing to Edward I. He was accordingly chosen arbitrator; and both parties agreed to acquiesce in his decree. Now it was that this ambitious and enterprising prince, already master of Wales, resolved to make himself lord of the whole island of Britain, by reviving his obscure claim of feudal superiority over Scotland. Under pretence of examining the question with the

A. D. 1291.

utmost solemnity, he summoned all the Scottish barons to attend him at Norham on the southern banks of the Tweed; and having gained some, and intimi-

5 Buchan. *Rerum Scoticarum Hist.* lib. viii.—Robertson's *Hist. of Scotland*, book i.

dated others, he prevailed on all who were present, not excepting Bruce and Baliol, the two competitors for the succession, to acknowledge Scotland a fief of the English crown, and swear fealty to him as their sovereign or liege lord [6].

This step led to another still more important. As it was in vain to pronounce a sentence which he had not power to execute, Edward demanded possession of the disputed kingdom, that he might be able to deliver it to him whose right should be found preferable: and with that exorbitant demand the barons and the claimants complied. He soon after gave judgement in favour of Baliol, as being the least formidable of the competitors, in the opinion of a respectable historian ; but, in justice to Edward, I am bound to say, that his award, which was no less equitable than solemn, seemed to proceed merely from the state of the question. He not only referred it to the consideration of a hundred and forty commissioners, partly English and partly Scotch, but proposed it to all the celebrated lawyers in Europe, who returned an uniform answer conformable to the king's decree. Baliol renewed the oath of fealty to England, and was put in possession of the kingdom [8].

A. D. 1292.

Edward having thus established his unjust claim of feudal superiority over Scotland, aimed at the absolute sovereignty and dominion of that kingdom. He attempted to provoke Baliol by indignities; to rouse him to rebellion, and to rob him of his crown, as the punishment of his pretended treason and felony. Even the passive spirit of Baliol began to mutiny; and he entered into a secret alliance with France, which was already engaged in a war with England, the more effectually to maintain his independence.

A. D. 1295.

The expenses attending these multiplied wars of Edward,

6 Rymer, vol. ii.—W. Heming. vol. i. 7 Robertson.

8 Rymer, vol. ii.—W. Heming. vol. i.

and his new preparations for reducing Scotland, obliged him to have frequent recourse to parliamentary supplies, and introduced the lower orders of the state into the public councils. This period therefore, the twenty-third year of his reign, seems to be the true æra of the House of Commons: for the former precedent of representatives from the boroughs, summoned by the earl of Leicester, was regarded as the irregular act of a faction, and had been discontinued in all the subsequent parliaments. But when the multiplied necessities of the crown produced a greater demand for money than could be conveniently answered by the common mode of taxation, Edward became sensible, that the most expeditious way of obtaining supplies would be, to assemble the deputies of all the boroughs, inform them explicitly of the exigencies of the state, and desire their consent to the demands of their sovereign. He therefore issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament, with two knights of the shire, two deputies from each borough within their county, provided with sufficient powers from their community, to consent to such imposts as might seem necessary for the support of government—"as it is a most equitable rule," says he, in his preamble to this writ, "that what concerns all "should be approved by all, and common dangers be re"pelled by united efforts[9]." Such a way of thinking implies a generosity of mind much superior to what might be expected from Edward's general conduct.

The different corporations, after the election of these deputies, gave security for their attendance before the king and parliament; and their charges were borne by the borough that sent them[10]: how different in that, as well as in other respects, from our more modern representatives! —Instead of checking and controlling the authority of the king, they were naturally induced to adhere to him, as the great fountain of justice, and to support him against the

9 Brady's *Treatise of Boroughs*, from the Records.

10 Id. ibid.—*Reliquiæ* Spelm.

power of the nobles, who at once oppressed them, and disturbed him in the execution of the laws. The king, in his turn, gave countenance to an order of men so useful, and so little dangerous. The peers also were obliged to treat them with some respect, on account of their consequence as a body. By these means the commons, or third estate, long so abject in England, as well as in all other European countries, rose gradually to their present importance; and, in their progress, made arts and commerce, the necessary attendants of liberty and equality, flourish in Britain.

Edward employed the supplies granted by his people in warlike preparations against his northern neighbour. He cited Baliol, as his vassal, to appear in an English parliament at Newcastle. But that prince having now received pope Celestin's dispensation from his oath of fealty, renounced his homage to England, and set Edward at defiance. This bravado was but ill supported by the military operations of the Scots. Edward crossed the Tweed without opposition, at the head of thirty thousand foot, and four thousand horse. Berwick was taken by assault; the Scots were totally routed near Dunbar; the whole southern part of the kingdom was subdued; and the timid Baliol, discontented with his own subjects, and over-awed by the English, instead of making use of those resources which were yet left, hastened to make his submissions to the conqueror. He expressed the deepest penitence for his disloyalty to his liege lord; and he made a solemn and irrevocable renunciation of his crown into the hands of Edward [11].

A. D. 1296.

The English monarch marched as far north as Aberdeen and Elgin without meeting a single enemy. No Scot approached him, but to do homage. Even the turbulent Highlanders, ever refractory to their own princes, and insubmissive to the restraints of law, endeavoured by a

11 Rymer, vol. ii.—Heming. vol. i.—Triveti *Annal.*

timely obedience to prevent the devastation of their country: and Edward, flattering himself that he had now attained the great object of his wishes, in the final reduction of Scotland, left earl Warrenne governor of the kingdom, and returned with his victorious army into England[12].

Here a few particulars are necessary. There was a stone, to which the popular superstition of the Scots paid the highest veneration. All their kings were seated on it when they received inauguration. Ancient tradition assured them, that their nation should always govern where this stone was placed; and it was carefully preserved at Scone, as the true palladium of their monarchy, and their ultimate resource under all misfortunes. Edward gained possession of it, and carried it with him into England. He also gave orders for the destruction of the records, and of all documents calculated to preserve the memory of the independence of the kingdom of Scotland, and refute the English claims of superiority. The great seal of Baliol was broken, and that prince himself was brought to London, and commited to close custody in the Tower[13]. Two years after, he was restored to liberty, and submitted to a voluntary banishment in France; where, without making any farther attempt for the recovery of his royalty, he died in a private station.

Edward was not so successful in an effort which he made for the recovery of Guienne. Philip the Fair had robbed England of this province, by an artifice similar to that which Edward had practised against the Scots. He had cited the English monarch, as his vassal, to answer in the court of peers to the charge of treason against his sovereign, for having permitted his subjects to seise some Norman vessels, and denied satisfaction: and Edward refusing to comply, was declared guilty of treason, and the duchy of Guienne confiscated. An English army was sent over to recover it,

12 Heming.—Trivet. 13 W. Heming.—T. Walsingham.

under the earl of Lancaster, who died in a short time; and the earl of Lincoln, who succeeded him in the command, failed in the attempt. But the active and ambitious spirit of Edward could not rest satisfied so long as the ancient patrimony of his family remained in the hands of his rival. He therefore entered into an alliance with the earls of Holland and Flanders [14]; and hoped that, when he should enter the frontiers of France at the head of English, Flemish, and Dutch armies, the French king would purchase peace by the restitution of Guienne.

A.D. 1297.

To set this vast machine in motion, considerable supplies were necessary from parliament; and these Edward readily obtained both from the lords and commons. He was not so fortunate in his impositions on the clergy, whom he always hated, and from whom he demanded a fifth of all their moveables, as a punishment for their adherence to the Montfort faction. They urged the pope's bull in opposition to all such demands; and Edward, instead of applying to Boniface VIII., then pontiff, for a relaxation of his mandate, boldly told the ecclesiastics, that, since they refused to support the civil government, they were unworthy of receiving any benefit from it, and he would accordingly put them out of the protection of the laws.

This vigorous measure was immediately carried into execution. Orders were issued to the judges to receive no cause brought before them by the clergy; to hear and decide all causes in which they were defendants; to do every one justice against them, but to do them justice against nobody. The ecclesiastics soon found themselves in a very miserable situation. They could not remain always in their own houses or convents for want of subsistence: if they went abroad in quest of necessaries, they were robbed and abused by every ruffian, and no redress could be obtained by them for the most violent

14 Rymer, vol. ii.

injury. The spirit of the clergy was at last broken by this harsh treatment. They all either publicly or privately complied with the king's demands, and received the protection of the laws[15]. Not one ecclesiastic, as the sagacious Hume remarks, seemed willing to suffer, for the sake of religious privileges, this new species of martyrdom, the most tedious and languishing of any; the most mortifying to spiritual pride, and not rewarded by that crown of glory which the church holds up with such ostentation to her faithful sons.

But all these supplies were not sufficient for the king's necessities. He therefore had recourse to arbitrary power, and exacted contributions from every order of men in the kingdom. The people murmured, and the barons mutinied, notwithstanding their great personal regard for Edward. He was obliged to make concessions; to promise all his subjects a compensation for the losses they had sustained; and to confirm the Great Charter, with an additional clause, in order to secure the nation for ever against all impositions and taxes without consent of parliament[16]. These concessions, my dear Philip, our ancestors had the honour of extorting, by their boldness and perseverance, from the ablest, the most warlike, and the most ambitious monarch that ever sat upon the throne of England. The validity of the Great Charter was never afterwards formally disputed.

These domestic discontents obstructed the king's embarkation for Flanders; so that he lost the proper season for action, and after his arrival made no great progress against the enemy. The French monarch, however, proposed a cessation of arms; and peace was soon after concluded by the mediation of the pope, in consequence of which Guienne was restored to England.

In the mean time the Scots rebelled. Earl Warrenne having returned to England, on account of his ill state of

15 W. Heming. vol. i.—*Chron. Dunst.* vol. ii.
16 T. Walsingham.—W. Hemingford.

health, had left the administration entirely in the hands of Ormsby and Cressingham, the officers next in rank, who, instead of acting with the prudence and moderation necessary to reconcile the Scots to a yoke which they bore with such extreme reluctance, exasperated all men of spirit by the rigour of their government. Among these William Wallace, whose heroic exploits are worthy of just panegyric, but to whom the fond admiration of the Scots has ascribed many fabulous acts of prowess, undertook and accomplished the difficult project of delivering his native country from the dominion of foreigners. He had been provoked by the insolence of an English officer to put him to death; and finding himself on that account obnoxious to the conquerors, he fled into the woods, and offered himself as a leader to all whom the oppressions of the English governors had reduced to the like necessity. He was of a gigantic stature, and endowed with wonderful strength of body, invincible fortitude of mind, disinterested magnanimity, incredible patience, and ability to bear hunger, fatigue, and all the severities of the seasons; so that he soon acquired, among his desperate associates, that authority to which his virtues so eminently entitled him. Every day brought accounts of his gallant actions, which were received with no less favour by his countrymen than terror by the enemy. All men who thirsted after military fame were desirous to partake of his renown; his successful valour seemed to vindicate the nation from the ignominy under which it had fallen by its tame submission to the English; and although no nobleman of eminence ventured yet to join the party of Wallace, he had gained a general confidence and attachment which birth and fortune alone are not able to confer.

So many fortunate enterprises brought the valour of the Scottish chieftain's followers to correspond with his own: and he determined to strike a decisive blow against the English government. Ormsby, apprised of this intention,

fled hastily into England; and all the other officers of his nation imitated his example. Their terror added courage to the Scots, who took arms in every quarter. Many of the principal barons openly countenanced Wallace's party: and the nation, shaking off its fetters, prepared to defend, by one united effort, that liberty which it had so unexpectedly recovered from the hands of its oppressors.

Warrenne having collected an army of forty thousand men in the North of England, in order to re-establish his authority, suddenly entered Annandale, before the Scots had united their forces, or put themselves in a posture of defence; and many of the nobles, alarmed at the danger of their situation, renewed their oaths of fealty, and received a pardon for past offences. But Wallace, still undaunted, continued obstinate in his purpose. As he found himself unable to give battle to the enemy, he marched to the northward, in the hope of prolonging the war, and of turning to his advantage the situation of that mountainous and barren country. Warrenne attacked him in his camp near Stirling, on the banks of the Forth, where the English were totally routed. Cressingham, whose impatience urged this attack, was slain; Warrenne was obliged to retire into England, and the principal fortresses in Scotland surrendered to the conqueror[17].

Sept. 11.

Wallace was now universally revered as the deliverer of his country, and received from his followers the title of Regent or guardian of the kingdom, a dignity which he well deserved. Not satisfied with expelling the enemy, he urged his army to march into England, and revenge all past injuries by retaliating on that hostile nation. The Scots, who deemed every thing possible with such a leader, joyfully attended his call. They rushed into the northern counties during the winter, and, having extended their ravages on all sides, returned into their own country with ample spoils.

17 W. Heming—T. Walsingham.

Edward, who was in Flanders when he received intelligence of these events, hastened to England, in assured hopes, not only of wiping off every disgrace, but of recovering the important conquest of Scotland, which he had always considered as the chief glory of his reign. With this view he collected the military force of England, Wales, and Ireland; and, with an army of eighty thousand combatants, entered the devoted kingdom. Scotland was at no time able to withstand such a force. At present it was without a head, and was convulsed by intestine jealousies. The elevation of Wallace was the object of envy to the nobility, who repined to see a private man raised above them by his rank, and still more by his reputation. Sensible of these evils, Wallace resigned his authority; and the chief command devolved upon men more eminent by birth, though less distinguished by abilities, but under whom the nobles were more willing to serve in defence of their country. They fixed their station at Falkirk, where Edward came up with them, and defeated their army with great slaughter[18].

A.D. 1298.

July 22.

The subjection of Scotland, however, was not yet accomplished. The English, after reducing all the southern provinces, were obliged to retire for want of provisions; and the Scots, no less enraged at their present defeat than elevated by their past victories, still maintained the contest for liberty. They were again victorious, and again subdued. Wallace alone maintained his independence amidst the general slavery of his countrymen. But he was at length betrayed to the English by his friend Sir John Monteith: and Edward, whose natural bravery and magnanimity should have led him to respect the like qualities in an enemy, ordered this illustrious patriot to be carried in chains to London; to be tried as a rebel and traitor, though he had never made submission or sworn fealty to England, and to be exe-

A.D. 1299.

18 T. Walsingh.—T. Wikes.—W. Heming.

A.D. 1305. cuted on Tower-hill[19]. He did not think his favourite conquest secure, whilst Wallace lived. Policy, therefore, as well as revenge, urged him to sacrifice a hero who had defended for many years, with signal valour and perseverance, the liberties of his native country.

But the barbarous policy of Edward failed of the purpose to which it was directed. The cruelty and injustice exercised upon Wallace, instead of breaking the spirit, only roused more effectually the resentment of the Scots. All the envy which, during his life, had attended that gallant chieftain, being now buried in his grave, he was universally regarded as the champion of Scotland, and equally lamented by all ranks of men. The people were every where disposed to rise against the English government: and a new and more fortunate leader soon presented himself, who conducted them to liberty, to victory, and to vengeance.

Robert Bruce, grandson of that Robert who had been one of the competitors for the crown of Scotland, had formerly served in the English army; but, in a private conference with Wallace, after the battle of Falkirk, the flame of patriotism was suddenly conveyed from the breast of one hero to that of another. Bruce regretted his engagement with Edward, and secretly determined to take measures for rescuing from slavery his oppressed country. The death of Wallace and Baliol seemed to offer the desired opportunity. He hoped that the Scots, without a leader, and without a king, would unanimously repair to his standard, and seat him on their throne. Inflamed with the ardour of youth, and buoyed up by native courage, his high spirit saw alone the glory of the enterprise, or regarded the difficulties that must attend it as the source only of greater glory. The miseries and oppressions which he had beheld his countrymen suffer

19 Triveti *Annal.*

in their unequal contests for independence, the repeated defeats and misfortunes which they had undergone in the struggle, proved to him but so many incentives to bring them relief, and to lead them boiling with revenge against the haughty victors.

In consequence of this resolution, Bruce suddenly left the English court, and arrived at Dumfries, where many of the nobles happened to be assembled, and among the rest John Comyn, to whom he had communicated his designs, and who had basely revealed them to Edward. The noblemen were astonished at the appearance of Bruce, and yet more when he told them that he was come to live or die with them in defence of the liberties of his country, and that he hoped, with their assistance, to redeem the Scottish name from all the indignities which it had so long suffered from the tyranny of their imperious masters. It would be better, he said, if Heaven should so decree it, to perish at once like brave men, with swords in their hands, than to dread long, and at last undergo, the fate of the unfortunate Wallace[20].

A.D. 1305.

The spirit with which this discourse was delivered, the bold sentiments which it conveyed, the novelty of Bruce's declaration, assisted by the graces of his youth, and manly deportment, made deep impression on the minds of the nobles, and roused all those principles of indignation and revenge with which they had long been secretly actuated. They declared their resolution to use the utmost efforts for delivering their country from bondage, and to second the courage of Bruce with zeal and alacrity. Comyn alone, who had privately taken his measures with Edward, opposed the general determination, by representing the great power of the English nation; and Bruce, already informed of his treachery, followed him out of the assembly, stabbed him, and left him for dead. Sir Thomas

20 M. Westm.—Buchanan.

Kirkpatrick, one of Bruce's friends, asked him, on his return, if the traitor was slain. "I believe so," replied Bruce. "And is that a matter," cried Kirkpatrick, "to "be left to conjecture? I will secure him." He accordingly drew his dagger, ran to Comyn, and pierced him to the heart[21].

This assassination, which contains circumstances justly condemned by our present manners, was regarded in that age as an effort of manly vigour and just policy. Hence the family of Kirkpatrick took for the crest of their arms a hand with a bloody dagger; and, as a motto, the words employed by their ancestor when he executed that violent action: "I will secure him!"

The murder of Comyn affixed the zeal to the conspiracy of the Scottish nobles. They had now no resource left, but to shake off the yoke of England or perish in the attempt. The genius of the nation roused itself from its long dejection. Bruce fiercely attacked the dispersed bodies of the English; gained possession of many castles; and was solemnly crowned at Scone. The English were again driven out of the kingdom, except such as took shelter in the fortresses still in their hands; and Edward found that the Scots, already twice conquered by his valour, were yet unsubdued.

Conscious, however, of his superior power and skill in arms, this great monarch thought of nothing but victory and vengeance. He sent a body of troops into Scotland under Aymar de Valence, earl of Pembroke; who, falling unexpectedly upon Bruce, threw his army into disorder, and obliged him to take shelter in the Western Isles. Edward himself was advancing with a mighty force, determined to make the now defenceless Scots the victims of his severity, when he unexpectedly sickened and died at Carlisle; enjoining with his latest breath his son

July 7, 1307.

21 W. Heming.—M. Westm.—T. Walsingham.

and successor to prosecute the war, and not to desist before he had completely subdued the kingdom of Scotland[22].

The character of Edward I., as a warrior and politician, has already been sufficiently delineated. I shall therefore forbear touching again on those particulars, and conclude this letter with his merit as a legislator, which has justly secured to him the honourable appellation of the English Justinian. The numerous statutes passed during his reign settle the chief points of jurisprudence; and, as Sir Edward Coke observes, truly deserve the name of establishments, because they have been more constant and durable than any of the laws subsequently enacted. The regular order maintained in his administration also gave the common law an opportunity to refine itself; brought the judges to a certainty in their determinations, and the lawyers to precision in their pleadings. He regulated the jurisdiction of all courts, established the office of justice of the peace, and completed the division of the court of Exchequer into four distinct courts, each of which managed its separate branch, without dependence upon any one magistrate; and as the lawyers afterwards invented a method of carrying business from one court to another, the several courts became rivals and checks on each other; a circumstance which tended greatly to improve the practice of the law in this country[23]. But although Edward took so much care that his subjects should do justice to each other, we cannot ascribe it to his love of equity; for in all his transactions, either with them or with his neighbours, he always desired to have his own hands free:—and his violences upon both were not few.

22 T. Walsingham.—Trivet.

23 *Hist. of English Law*, by Sir Matthew Hale.

LETTER XXXVIII.

A View of the reign of Edward II., with an Account of the Affairs of Scotland.

FROM the critical situation of affairs between England and Scotland at the death of Edward I., it will be adviseable, my dear Philip, to carry farther the history of our own island, before we return to the transactions of the continent.

No prince ever ascended the English throne with more promising advantages than Edward II. He was in the twenty-fourth year of his age, and universally beloved by the people, both on account of the sweetness of his disposition, and as the son and successor of their illustrious monarch. He was at the head of a great army, ready to subject the whole island to his sway; and all men seemed to expect tranquillity and happiness under his government. But the first act of his reign blasted all these hopes, and showed him totally unqualified for his high station. Instead of prosecuting the conquest of Scotland, according to the desire of his father, he returned to England after some feeble efforts, and disbanded his forces; although Robert Bruce had emerged from his retreat, and had become sufficiently formidable to render more vigorous measures necessary.

The next step taken by Edward was no less weak and imprudent. He recalled Piers Gaveston, a youthful favourite, whom the late king had banished on account of his ascendency over this prince, and whom, on his death-bed, he had made him promise never more to encourage. Gaveston was the son of a Gascon knight of some distinction, and by his shining accomplishments had early insinuated himself into the affections of young Edward, whose heart was easily caught by appearances, and strongly disposed to friendship

and confidence. He was endowed with the utmost elegance of shape and person; had a fine mien and easy carriage; had distinguished himself in all warlike and genteel exercises, and was celebrated for those quick sallies of wit in which his countrymen usually excel. We therefore need not be surprised at his being thought necessary to a gay monarch, whose foibles he was able to flatter: but a wise king will have no public favourite, and still less a foreign one. Edward experienced this danger.

Gaveston no sooner arrived at court than he was loaded with benefits, and exalted to the greatest honours. The king bestowed upon him the earldom of Cornwall; gave him his niece Margaret in marriage; and seemed to enjoy no pleasure in his royalty but as it served to add lustre to this object of his fond idolatry. The haughty barons, already dissatisfied with Edward's conduct in regard to Scotland, were enraged at the superiority of a minion whom they despised; nor did they endeavour to conceal their animosity.

The favourite, instead of disarming envy by the moderation and modesty of his behaviour, displayed his power and influence with the utmost ostentation. Every day multiplied his enemies, who only waited for an opportunity of cementing their union, so as to render it fatal both to him and his master. This union being at length effected by Thomas earl of Lancaster, cousin-german to the king, the confederate nobles bound themselves by oath to expel Gaveston: they took arms for that purpose, and Edward was obliged to banish him. But he was afterwards recalled, reinstated in his former consequence, and became more than ever, by his continued insolence, the object of general detestation among the nobility. The confederacy against him was renewed: he was again banished, and again recalled by the fond deluded monarch. An universal revolt took place: Edward and his

A.D. 1308.

A.D. 1312.

favourite were hunted from corner to corner; and Gaveston at last fell by the hands of the public executioner[1].

After this sacrifice, the king's person became less obnoxious to the people. The discontents of all men seemed to be much appeased; the animosities of faction no longer prevailed; and England, it was hoped, would now be able to take vengeance on all her enemies, but especially on the Scots, whose progress was the object of general resentment and indignation.

Soon after Edward's retreat from Scotland, Robert Bruce made himself master of the whole kingdom, except a few fortresses. He daily reconciled the minds of the nobility to his dominion: he enlisted under his standard every bold spirit, and he enriched his followers with the spoils of the enemy. Sir James Douglas, in whom commenced the greatness and renown of that warlike family, seconded Robert in all his enterprises. Edward Bruce, the king's brother, also distinguished himself by his valour; and the dread of the English power being now abated by the feeble conduct of Edward, even the least sanguine of the Scots began to entertain hopes of recovering their independence. They obtained a truce, which was of short duration, and ill observed on both sides. But, short as it was, it served to consolidate the power of the king, and introduce order into the civil government. War was renewed with greater fury than ever. Not content with defending himself, Robert made successful inroads into England, supported his needy followers by the plunder of the country, and taught them to despise the military genius of a nation which had long been the object of their terror.

Edward, at length roused from his lethargy, had marched with an army into Scotland; and Robert, determined not to risque too much against a superior force, had retired amidst

1 T. Walsingham.—T. de la More.—W. Heming.

the mountains. The English monarch advanced beyond Edinburgh; but being destitute of provisions, and ill supported by his nobility, he was obliged to return home, without gaining any advantage over the enemy. The seeming union, however, of all parties in England, after the death of Gaveston, opened again the prospect of reducing Scotland, and promised a happy conclusion to a war in which both the interests and the passions of the nation were so deeply engaged.

Edward assembled forces from all quarters, with a view of finishing at one blow this important enterprise. He summoned the most warlike of his vassals from Gascony: he enlisted troops in Flanders, and other foreign countries: he invited over great numbers of the disorderly Irish, as to a certain prey: he joined to them a body of Welsh, who were actuated by like motives: he collected a considerable force in England, and entered Scotland at the head of an army of about eighty thousand men. A. D. 1314. The Scottish host did not exceed thirty thousand combatants; but being composed of men who had distinguished themselves by many acts of valour, who were rendered desperate by their situation, and who were inured to all the varieties of fortune, they might justly, under such a leader as Bruce, be esteemed equal to a far more numerous body. Robert, however, left as little as possible to the superior gallantry of his troops. He posted himself strongly at Bannockburn, near Stirling: he had a rivulet in front, a hill on his right flank, and a morass on his left.

As soon as the English army appeared, a smart conflict arose between two bodies of cavalry; and Robert, June 14. engaging in a single combat with Henry de Bohun, at one stroke cleft the head of his antagonist with a battle-axe, in sight of the two armies. The English horse fled with precipitation to their main body, and night suspended the hostilities. Encouraged by this favourable event, and glorying in the prowess of their king, the Scots prognosti-

cated a happy issue to the contest of the ensuing day; and the English, confident in their numbers, and elated by past successes, longed for an opportunity of revenge. The darkness was borne with impatience: and Edward, as soon as light appeared, drew up his forces, and advanced against the Scots. Both armies engaged with great ardour, and the dispute was fierce and bloody. Sir James Douglas had broken the English cavalry; but their line of infantry was still firm, when a stratagem decided the fortune of the field. Bruce had collected a number of waggoners and sumpter boys, and furnished them with standards. They appeared upon the heights towards the left. The English mistook them for a fresh army coming to surround them: a panic seised them; they threw down their arms and fled. The Scots pursued with great slaughter as far as Berwick; and, besides an inestimable booty, took many persons of quality prisoners, with above four hundred gentlemen, whom Robert treated with great humanity, and whose ransom was a new accession of wealth to the victorious army. Edward himself narrowly escaped, by taking shelter in Dunbar, whence he passed by sea to Berwick[2].

Such was the great and decisive battle of Bannockburn, which secured the independence of Scotland, fixed Bruce on the throne of that kingdom, and may be deemed the most signal blow that the English monarchy has received since the Norman invasion. The number of slain is not certainly known; but it must have been very great: for the impression of this defeat on the minds of the English was so strong, that for some years no superiority of force could encourage them to keep the field against the Scots.

In order to avail himself of his present success, Robert entered England; ravaged all the northern counties without opposition; and, elate with his continued prosperity, now entertained hopes of making the most important conquests

2 Mon. Malms.—T. de la More.—Walsingh. *Ypod. Neust.*

at the expense of the English. He sent over his brother Edward with six thousand men into Ireland; and he himself followed soon after with a more numerous body of troops. But a grievous famine, which harassed both islands, obliged Robert to return to Britain. His brother, who assumed the title of king of Ireland, was defeated and slain by the English near Dundalk; and Robert became sensible that he had attempted projects too extensive for the force of his narrow kingdom. A.D. 1315. A. D. 1318.

Edward, besides the disasters which he suffered from the invasion of the Scots, and the opposition to his government in Ireland, was harassed with a rebellion in Wales; and the factions of his nobility troubled him yet more than all these. They took advantage of the public calamities to insult his fallen fortunes, and endeavoured to establish their own independence on the ruins of the throne. His unhappy situation obliged him to comply with all their demands. The administration was new-modeled by the direction of Lancaster, and that prince was placed at the head of the council. Edward himself was evidently by nature unfit to hold the reins of government. He was sensible of his own defects, and sought to be governed; but all the favourites (for such they were rather than ministers) whom he successively chose, were regarded as fellow-subjects exalted above their rank and station, and became the objects of envy to the chief nobility. His principal favourite, after the death of Gaveston, was Hugh le Despenser, or Spenser, who was of a noble family, and possessed all the exterior accomplishments of person and address that were fitted to engage the weak mind of Edward, but was destitute of that moderation and prudence which might have qualified him to mitigate the envy of the great, and conduct himself quietly through the perils of the dangerous station to which he was advanced.

No sooner was Edward's attachment declared for Spen-

ser, than the turbulent Lancaster and most of the great barons regarded him as their rival, and formed violent plans for his ruin. They withdrew themselves from parliament, took arms, and demanded the banishment of the favourite and his father. The father was then abroad, the son at sea; and both were employed in executing different commissions. The king replied, that his coronation oath, by which he was bound to observe the laws, restrained him from giving his assent to so illegal a demand, or condemning noblemen who were accused of no crime, nor had any opportunity of giving answer. But equity and reason proved a feeble barrier against men who had arms in their hands, and who, being already involved in guilt, saw no safety but in success and victory. They entered London with their troops; and adducing before the parliament a charge against the Spensers (of which they did not attempt to prove one article), they procured, by menaces and violence, a sentence of perpetual exile against those ministers[3].

A.D. 1321.

This act of violence, in which the king was obliged to acquiesce, rendered his person and authority so contemptible, that every one thought himself entitled to treat the royal family with neglect. The queen was publicly insulted; but, as that princess was then popular, Edward was permitted to take vengeance on the offender. Having now some forces on foot, and having concerted measures with his friends throughout England, he ventured to pull off the mask; to attack all his enemies; and to recall the two Spensers, whose sentence he declared illegal, unjust, and contrary to the tenor of the Great Charter[4].

The king had now anticipated the movements of the barons; an advantage which in those times was generally decisive. It proved so in the present instance. Lancaster

3 Tyrrel, from the Register of C. C. Canterbury.—T. Walsingh.—Rymer, vol. iii.

4 Rymer, ubi sup.

alone made resistance; he was taken at Boroughbridge, condemned by a court martial, and beheaded at Pontefract. A. D. 1322. About twenty of the most notorious offenders were afterwards condemned by legal trial, and executed. Many were thrown into prison; some made their escape beyond sea; and most of the forfeitures were seised by young Spenser, whose rapacity was insatiable. The barons of the king's party were disgusted with this partial division of the spoils; the envy against the favourite rose higher than ever. To the people, who always hated him, he became still more the object of aversion: all the relatives of the attainted barons vowed revenge; and although tranquillity was in appearance restored to the kingdom, the general contempt of the king, and odium of Spenser, engendered future revolutions and convulsions.

In such a situation no success could be expected from foreign wars. Edward, therefore, after making one more fruitless attempt against Scotland, whence he retreated with dishonour, found it necessary to A. D. 1323. terminate hostilities with that kingdom by a truce of thirteen years. This truce was so much the more seasonable for England, as the nation was at that time threatened with hostilities from France. Charles the Fair had some grounds of complaint against the English ministers in Guienne, and seemed desirous of profiting in a territorial view by the indolence and weakness of Edward.

After an embassy by the earl of Kent had been tried in vain, queen Isabella obtained permission to go over to Paris, and endeavour to adjust the dis- A. D. 1325. pute with her brother Charles. She there found a number of English fugitives, the remains of the Lancastrian faction; and their common hatred of young Spenser soon begot a secret friendship and correspondence between them and that princess, who envied the favourite his influence with the king. Among these refugees was Roger Mortimer, a potent baron of the Welsh marches, who had been

condemned for high treason, but had made his escape from the Tower. His consequence introduced him to queen Isabella, and the graces of his person and address advanced him quickly in her affections. He became her confident and counsellor in all her measures; and, gaining ground daily upon her heart, he engaged her to sacrifice at last, to her passion, all the sentiments of honour and fidelity to her husband. Hating now the man she had injured, and whom she never loved, she entered ardently into all Mortimer's conspiracies; and having artfully secured the person and acquiescence of the heir of the monarchy, she resolved on the utter ruin of the king, as well as of his favourite. She engaged her brother to take part in the same criminal purpose: her court was daily filled with exiled barons: Mortimer lived in the most declared intimacy with her, and a correspondence was secretly carried on with the malcontent party in England[5].

When Edward was informed of these alarming circumstances, he ordered the queen to return speedily with the prince. But Isabella publicly replied, that she would never set foot in the kingdom, while Hugh Spenser was suffered to influence and advise the king. This declaration increased her popularity in England, and threw a decent veil over her treasonable enterprises. She no sooner arrived in England with her son than the king was entirely deserted. He fled into Wales. The elder Spenser, now earl of Winchester, and governor of the castle of Bristol, was delivered by the garrison into the hands of his enemies; and, being instantly condemned, without any trial, witness, or accusation, to suffer death, he was hanged on a gibbet in his armour. His unhappy but more criminal son soon after shared the same fate: and the king, disappointed in his expectation of succours from the Welsh, was seised among their mountains, where he had endeavoured to conceal himself, and confined in Kenil-

A. D. 1326.

5 T. Walsingham.—T. de la More.

worth castle. Taking advantage of the prevailing delusion, the queen summoned in Edward's name a parliament at Westminster; where the king was accused of incapacity for government, and by the authority of her partisans deposed. The prince, a youth of fourteen years of age, was placed on the throne, and the queen was appointed regent during his minority [6]. A.D. 1327.

The great body of the people are seldom long in the wrong with respect to any political measure. Corrupted as they now were by the licentiousness of the times, and inflamed by faction, they could not, in the present instance, remain insensible to the voice of nature. A wife had dishonoured her husband, invaded his kingdom with an armed force, and insisted on his dethronement: she had made her infant son an instrument in this unnatural treatment of his father; and had, by false pretences, seduced the nation into rebellion against their sovereign, whose weakness was his only crime. All these circumstances were so odious in themselves, and formed such a complicated scene of guilt, that the least reflexion sufficed to open men's eyes, and make them detest so flagrant an infringement of every public and private duty.

The earl of Lancaster (formerly earl of Leicester) to whose custody the deposed prince had been committed, was soon touched with sentiments of compassion and generosity towards his sovereign; and besides using him with gentleness and humanity, he was supposed to have entertained more honorable intentions in his favour. The king was therefore taken out of his hands, and delivered over to lord Berkeley, Maltravers, and Gournay, who were entrusted alternately, each for a month, with the charge of guarding him. While in the custody of Berkeley, Edward was treated with respect; but when the turn of Maltravers and Gournay came, every species of indig-

6 Ypod. Neust.—T. de la More.—Rymer, vol. iv.

nity was offered him, as if their intention had been to break entirely the unhappy prince's spirit, and to employ his sorrows and afflictions, instead of more violent and more dangerous means, as the instruments of his murder. That method of destroying him, however, appearing too slow to the impatient Mortimer, he sent orders to the two ruffians to dispatch the king secretly. Taking advantage of the indisposition of Berkeley, they seised Edward in that nobleman's castle, threw him on a bed, held him down violently, and thrust intohis fundamenta horn, through which they burned his bowels with a red-hot iron. Although outward marks of violence were prevented by this expedient, the atrocious deed was discovered to all the guards and attendants by the screams of the agonising king [7].

Thus perished the unfortunate Edward II. It is not easy for imagination to conceive a man more innocent and inoffensive, or a prince less fitted for governing a fierce and turbulent people. The vigour and capacity of the son made ample amends for his father's weakness. But a variety of objects must occupy our attention before we consider the reign of Edward III.

7 T. Walsingham.—T. de la More.

LETTER XXXIX.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, from the Election of Rodolph of Hapsburg to the Death of Henry VII.

THE German empire, my dear Philip, as I have already had occasion to observe, could not properly be said to have a head, from the death of Frederick II. till the election of Rodolph count of Hapsburg. This great captain, who had for some time exercised the of-

A.D. 1273.

fice of grand marshal to Ottocarus king of Bohemia, and was raised to the imperial dignity on account of his military talents, no sooner found himself in possession of the august throne, than he employed his authority in suppressing the disorders which had prevailed during the interregnum; and he succeeded so well in his endeavours, that peace and security were soon generally re-established in Germany. He destroyed in Thuringia sixty castles, which were the retreats of banditti, and ordered ninety-nine highwaymen to be hanged at one time in the city of Erfort [1].

Having thus in some measure settled the interior police of the empire, Rodolph assembled a diet at Mentz, where he granted new privileges to Goslar and other cities, and confirmed those which had been granted by his predecessors. Here also the deliberations of the assembly turned upon the conduct of certain princes, who had protested against the election of the count of Hapsburg. Among these was his former master, the king of Bohemia, against whom the diet had other causes of dissatisfaction. He had seised the duchy of Austria, after the death of Frederic, the last duke; and the states complained of the oppressions which they suffered under this usurper, from whom they begged to be delivered.

A.D. 1274.

A second diet was summoned on this subject at Augsburg: where Ottocarus not appearing, or doing homage by his ambassadors, was declared a rebel to the empire. His possession of Austria, Stiria, Carniola, and Carinthia, was adjudged illegal: and the emperor was desired to divest him of those territories.

A.D. 1275.

When this sentence was notified to the king, he boldly exclaimed, "To whom should I do homage?—I owe Ro-"dolph nothing: he was formerly my servant, and I paid "him his wages. My possessions I will maintain with the "point of my sword [2]."

1 *Annal. Boior.*—Heiss, liv. ii. c. 22.

2 Æn. Sylv. *Hist. Bohem.*

Having formed this resolution, he associated himself with several other German princes, and among the rest with the duke of Bavaria. But they were all at last obliged to submit; and the proud Ottocarus himself not only relinquished the contested territories, but did homage for Bohemia and Moravia.

This homage was performed in the island of Camberg in the Danube, under a close canopy, in order to save Ottocarus from a public humiliation. He repaired to the place, covered with gold and jewels. Rodolph, by a superior pride, received him in the most coarse and simple dress; and in the midst of the ceremony, either by accident or design, the curtains of the canopy fell back, and exposed to the eyes of the people, and the armies that lined the banks of the river, the haughty king on his knees, with his hands joined between those of his conqueror, whom he had so often called his steward, and to whom he now became cup-bearer.

A. D. 1276.

The wife of Ottocarus, a Russian princess, and no less haughty than her husband, was so much hurt by this mortifying circumstance, that she persuaded him to renounce the treaty he had concluded with Rodolph, and again have recourse to arms for the recovery of Austria. The emperor immediately marched against him; and a battle ensued, in which Ottocarus was slain.

A. D. 1278.

Rodolph now discovered himself to be no less a politician than a warrior. He gave the government of Austria and its appendages to his eldest son, count Albert; whom he afterwards, in a diet at Augsburg, publicly invested with that duchy, which was incorporated with the college of the princes: hence arose the Austrian power and grandeur. Rodolph, at the same time, invested another son with the county of Suabia, which belonged to him in right of his wife. He also wisely resolved to adhere to the articles of the treaty with Ottocarus; and ac-

A. D. 1282.

cordingly put his infant son Wenceslaus under the tutelage of the marquis of Brandenburg [3].

But although Rodolph's authority was now fully established in Germany, he was far from being master in Italy. The imperial crown had indeed been confirmed to him by Gregory X., on his ceding to the holy see the lands of the countess Matilda, and all the territories mentioned in the grants made to the church by former emperors. In so doing, Rodolph properly yielded nothing but the right of receiving homage from noblemen, who never submitted to it without reluctance, and cities which it was not in his power to command. Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, had a greater number of ships than the emperor could muster of ensigns: Florence had become considerable, and was already the nurse of the liberal arts.

Rodolph spent the latter part of his reign in establishing the grandeur of his family in Austria. He granted privileges to the clergy; bestowed new dignities upon the noblemen; diminished the taxes; built and repaired public edifices; and behaved with such generosity and moderation, as won the hearts of all men. But, notwithstanding his popularity, he could not procure the election of his son Albert, as king of the Romans; a disappointment which, together with the death of his son Rodolph, so much chagrined him, that he died soon after. He was a prince of great valour, sagacity, and probity; and raised the empire, from a state of misery and confusion, to the enjoyment of peace, policy, and opulence [4].

Sept. 30, 1291.

After an interregnum of nine months, which was produc-

3 Heiss, ubi sup.—Du Mont. *Corp. Diplom.* tome i.

4 Heiss. lib. ii. cap. 22.—Barre, tome vi.—*Annal. de l'Emp.* tome ii.—Nothing can show in a stronger light Rodolph's resolution and presence of mind than his behaviour at his coronation. The absence of the imperial sceptre (supposed to be that of Charlemagne), which had been mislaid, seemed to afford some disaffected noblemen a pretext for refusing the oath of allegiance:—"This is my sceptre," said Rodolph, seising a crucifix; and all the princes and nobles instantly took the oath, and did him homage as emperor.

tive of many disorders, the German princes raised to the imperial throne Adolphus of Nassau, on the
A. D. 1292.
same principle which had made them choose his predecessor. He seemed capable of maintaining the glory of the empire at the head of its armies, without being able to enslave it.

The reign of this prince was one continued scene of troubles, and at last terminated in his deposition. He had been hurried by his necessities into the commission of several acts of injustice; which Albert duke of Austria, dissatisfied at not succeeding to the imperial throne, took care to represent in the worst light. A confederacy was formed against Adolphus; and he was deposed
A. D. 1298.
by the archbishop of Mentz, in the name of the princes of the empire.

"Six years ago," said the archbishop, "the empire being vacant, we canonically elected Adolphus, count of Nassau, king of the Romans; knowing at that time no person more worthy of the dignity. At first he conducted himself wisely, following the counsels of the most prudent electors and princes of his court. But he began by degrees to despise their advice, and listen to the counsels of young persons, without either sense or experience; then he found himself destitute of means and friends to assist him sincerely in bearing the burthen of government. The electors perceiving his indigence, and swayed by many other motives, have demanded the pope's consent to depose him, and choose another emperor. We are told that our envoys have obtained the consent of his holiness; though those of Adolphus affirm the contrary: but we, having no regard to any authority except that which is vested in ourselves, and finding Adolphus incapable of governing the empire, do depose him from the imperial dignity, and elect Albert, duke of Austria, king of the Romans[5]."

[5] *Chron. Colm.*

Adolphus, apprised of this election, raised the siege of Ruffach, in Alsace, and marched towards Spire, where he encamped. He was reinforced by the count Palatine Rodolph, Otho duke of Bavaria, and the cities of Spire and Worms, which had never deserted his cause. Albert advanced towards him, in order to dispute the imperial crown by arms. They engaged between Gelnsheim and the cloister of Rosendal, and the battle was maintained with much obstinacy on both sides. In the heat of action Adolphus, singling out his rival, attacked him hand to hand, haughtily exclaiming, "Here you shall resign to "me the empire and your life!"—"Both," replied Albert, "are in the hands of God;" and immediately struck his competitor with such violence in the face, that he fell from his horse, and was instantly slain.

During the reign of Adolphus, and also of Rodolph, the Jews were persecuted in the empire with great cruelty, on a supposition that they had slain several Christian children, and committed other crimes, which excited the hatred of the public. They were accused of having stolen a consecrated host: and the credulous and vindictive inhabitants of Nuremberg, Rotenburg, and other towns, seised all the Israelites that fell in their way, committed them to the flames, and drove the rest to such despair, that numbers chose rather to destroy themselves and their families than run the hazard of falling into the hands of the merciless Christians[6].

Though Albert had been elected king of the Romans before his victory over Adolphus, and consequently became emperor on the death of that prince, he chose to have his title confirmed by a new diet at Frankfort; and he was afterwards solemnly crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. The con-

6 *Annal. Steron.*—Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. iii.—Dr. Mosheim leaves it doubtful whether the accusations against the Jews were true or false; but his learned and judicious translator, in a note, gives reason to believe that they were insidiously forged.

course of people on this occasion was so great, that the duke of Saxony, the emperor's brother, and several other persons, were squeezed to death in the crowd[7].

The first years of Albert's reign were disquieted by a quarrel with the pope and the ecclesiastical electors. Boniface VIII., the last pontiff who pretended to dispose of crowns, and who carried the pretensions of the apostolic see as high as any of his predecessors, took part with the three German archbishops, who had refused to answer the emperor's summons. They were at length, however, obliged to submit; and Boniface confirmed the election of Albert, when he wished to make him the instrument of his vengeance against Philip the Fair.

A.D. 1303.

But the emperor did not obtain this confirmation, it is said, before he had declared, that "the empire was transferred by the holy see from the Greeks to the Germans; "that the sovereign pontiff had granted to certain ecclesiastical and secular princes the right of electing a king "of the Romans, destined to the empire; and that emperors and kings derive their regal power from the pope[8]."

The most remarkable event in this reign is the rise of the republic of Switzerland. Fortified by their natural situation, surrounded with mountains, torrents, and woods, the Swiss, having nothing to fear from strangers, had lived happily in a rugged country, suited only to men who were accustomed to a frugal and laborious course of life. Equality of condition was the basis of their government. They had been free from time immemorial; and when any of their nobility attempted to tyrannise, they were either expelled, or reduced within bounds by the people. But although the Swiss were extremely jealous of their liberty, they had always been submissive to the empire, on which they depended; and many of their towns were free and imperial.

7 Heiss, liv. ii. chap. xxiv.

8 *Hist. des Demelez de Bonif. VIII. avec Philippe le Bel.*—Mosheim, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. iii.

When Rodolph of Hapsburg was elected emperor, several lords of castles formally accused the cantons of Ury, Schwitz, and Underwald, of having withdrawn themselves from their feudal subjection. But Rodolph, who had formerly fought against those petty tyrants, decided in favour of the citizens; and thenceforth these three cantons were under the patronage, but not the dominion, of the house of Austria.

Rodolph always treated the Swiss with great indulgence, and generously defended their rights and privileges against the noblemen who attempted to infringe them. Albert's conduct in this respect was just the reverse of his father's: he wanted to govern the Swiss as an absolute sovereign, and had formed a scheme for erecting their country into a principality for one of his sons. In order to accomplish this purpose, he endeavoured to persuade the cantons of Ury, Schwitz, and Underwald, to submit voluntarily to his dominion. In case of compliance, he promised to rule them with great lenity; but finding them tenacious of their independence, and deaf to all his solicitations, he resolved to tame them by rougher methods, and appointed governors who domineered over them in the most arbitrary manner.

The tyranny of these governors exceeded all belief. Geisler, governor of Ury, ordered his hat to be fixed upon a pole in the market-place of Altdorf, and every passenger was commanded, on pain of death, to pay obeisance to it. But the independent spirit of William Tell, who, among others, had projected the deliverance of his country, disdained to pay that absurd homage. On this the governor ordered him to be hanged; but remitted the punishment, on condition that he should strike an apple from his son's head with an arrow. Tell, who was an excellent marksman, accepted the alternative, and had the good fortune to strike off the apple without hurting his son. But Geisler perceiving a second arrow under William's coat, inquired for what purpose that was intended: "It was designed for

"thee," replied the indignant Swiss, "if I had killed my "son." For that heroic answer he was doomed to perpetual imprisonment, though fortune happily put it out of the governor's power to carry his sentence into execution.

This and other acts of wanton tyranny determined Arnauld Melchtat, a native of Underwald, Werner Straffacher of Schwitz, and Walter Furtz of Ury, to put in execution those measures which they had concerted for delivering themselves and their country from the Austrian dominion. Naturally bold and enterprising, and united by a long intimacy of friendship, they had frequently met in private to deliberate upon this interesting subject: each associated three others; and these twelve men accomplished their important enterprise, without the

A. D. 1308.

loss of a single life. Having prepared the inhabitants of their several cantons for a revolt, they surprised the Austrian governors; conducted them to the frontiers, obliging them to promise upon oath never more to serve against the Helvetic nation; and then dismissed them; an instance of moderation not perhaps to be equalled in the history of mankind, of a people incensed against their oppressors, and who had them in their power[9].

Thus, my dear Philip, these three cantons procured their freedom; and the other provinces soon engaged in this confederacy, which gave birth to the republic of Switzerland. Never did any people fight with greater spirit for their liberty than the Swiss. They purchased it by above fifty battles against the Austrians; and they well deserved the prize for which they fought; for never were the beneficial effects of liberty more remarkable than in Switzerland.

When Albert was ready to hazard his forces against that courage which is inspired by the enthusiasm of new-born freedom, he fell a sacrifice to his rapacity and injustice. His nephew John, who could not obtain from him the en-

9 Stefler: *Annal. Helvetic.*

joyment of his patrimony, was inflamed with a thirst of revenge. This injured youth, confederating with three others, stabbed the emperor in presence of his court and army, on the banks of the river Rus, in the neighbourhood of Switzerland[10]. No sovereign was ever less regretted. He did not want valour, or abilities; but a desire of aggrandising his family influenced his whole conduct, and made him violate every public and private tie.

May 1.

The imperial throne continued vacant for seven months after the assassination of Albert. At length the electors assembled at Frankfort, and chose Henry count of Luxemburg; who was crowned, without opposition, at Aix-la-Chapelle. Soon afterward, in a diet at Spire, sentence of death was pronounced against prince John for the murder of his uncle, the late emperor; whose sons, at the same time, demanded the investiture of Austria and the other hereditary dominions of their father, which Henry intended to seise. They obtained their demand, on making him sensible, that, as the house of Austria had already sent two emperors out of the world, it might yet prove fatal to a third, if he did not desist from his unjust pretensions[11].

A.D. 1309.

At this assembly also appeared Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia. She had been contracted to John, count of Luxemburg, son of the emperor; but the marriage had been delayed under different pretences. The princess therefore demanded, that the contract might be fulfilled, or cause shown why the nuptials should not be solemnised; and understanding that a report had been spread to the disadvantage of her chastity, she repaired to the emperor's anti-chamber, undressed herself to the shift, in the presence of the ladies there assembled, and, approaching Henry in that condition, requested that she might be immediately examined by matrons. She was accordingly committed to the inspection of some experienced

10 Rebdorf. ad ann. 1308. 11 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. 25.

ladies and midwives, who unanimously declared her an unspotted virgin; and, in consequence of their testimony, the nuptials were solemnised with great magnificence, in presence of the electors and other princes and noblemen of the diet[12].

This is a point on which our modern physicians would have had many consultations. They pretend that the signs of virginity are altogether precarious, though every old woman affirms them to be infallible. And fortunately the daughter of Wenceslaus was judged by old women; for so scrupulous were the bridegrooms of those days on the article of chastity, that the slightest suspicion in regard to it was sufficient to obstruct the marriage, or ruin the happiness of a couple for life.

The emperors, from the time of Frederic II., seemed to have lost sight of Italy. But Henry VII., as soon as he had settled the affairs of the North, resolved to re-establish the imperial authority in that country. With this view a diet was convoked at Frankfort; where proper supplies being granted for the emperor's journey, well known by the name of the Roman Expedition, he set out for Italy, accompanied by the dukes of Austria and Bavaria, the archbishop of Treves, the bishop of Liege, the counts of Savoy and Flanders, with other noblemen, and the militia of all the imperial towns.

A.D. 1310.

Italy was still divided by the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, who butchered one another without humanity or remorse. But their contest was no longer the same: it was not now a struggle between the empire and the priesthood, but between faction and faction, inflamed by mutual jealousies and animosities. Pope Clement V. had been obliged to leave Rome, which was distracted by the anarchy of popular government. The Colonna and Ursini families, and the Roman barons, divided the city: and this division

12 Heiss, lib. ii. cap. 25.

was the cause of the long abode of the popes in France, as we shall have occasion to see in the history of that kingdom; so that Rome seemed equally lost to the popes and the emperors. Sicily was in the possession of the house of Arragon, in consequence of the famous massacre called the Sicilian Vespers, which delivered that island from the tyranny of the French, as will be afterward more fully related. Carobert, king of Hungary, disputed the kingdom of Naples with his uncle Robert, son of Charles II. of the house of Anjou. The house of Esté had established itself at Ferrara; and the Venetians aimed at the possession of that country. The old league of the Italian cities no longer subsisted. It had been formed with no other view than to oppose the emperors; and since they had neglected Italy, the cities were wholly employed in aggrandising themselves at the expense of each other. The Florentines and the Genoese made war upon the republic of Pisa. Every city was also divided into factions within itself; Florence between the Blacks and the Whites, and Milan between the Visconti and the Turriani.

In the midst of these troubles Henry VII. appeared in Italy, and caused himself to be crowned king of Lombardy at Milan. The Guelphs had concealed the old iron crown of the Lombard kings, as if the right of reigning were attached to a particular circlet of metal. But Henry, contemning such a thought, ordered a new crown to be made, with which the ceremony of inauguration was performed[13].

A.D. 1311.

Cremona was the first place that ventured to oppose the emperor. He reduced it by force, and subjected it to heavy contributions. Parma, Vicenza, and Placentia, made peace with him on reasonable conditions. Padua paid a hundred thousand crowns, and received an imperial officer as governor. The Venetians presented Henry with a large sum of

13 Struv. period. ix. sect. iv.

money, an imperial crown of gold enriched with diamonds, and a chain of very curious workmanship. Brescia made a desperate resistance, and sustained a very long siege; in the course of which the emperor's brother was slain, and his army diminished to such a degree, that the inhabitants ventured to march out, under the command of their prefect, Thibault de Drussati, and gave him battle. But they were repulsed with great loss, after an obstinate engagement, and at last obliged to submit. Their city was dismantled.

From Brescia Henry marched to Genoa, where he was received with expressions of joy, and splendidly entertained. He next proceeded to Rome, where, after much bloodshed, he received the imperial crown from the hands of the cardinals. Clement V., who had originally invited Henry into Italy, growing jealous of his success, had leagued with Robert king of Naples and the Ursini to oppose his entrance into Rome. He entered it in spite of them, by the assistance of the Colonna party[14].

A.D. 1312.

Now master of that ancient city, Henry appointed a governor of it; and ordered, that the cities and states of Italy should pay him an annual tribute. In this order he comprehended the kingdom of Naples, to which he was preparing to enforce his claim of superiority, when he died at Benevento of poison (as it is commonly supposed), given him by a Dominican friar in the consecrated wine of the sacrament[15].

Aug. 25, 1313.

During the last years of the reign of Henry VII., who was a valiant and politic prince, the knights of the Teutonic order aggrandised themselves by making war upon the Pagans of the North. They possessed themselves of Samogitia, after butchering all the inhabitants that refused to embrace Christianity: they took Dantzic, and purchased Pomerella of the marquis of Brandenburg. But while the order was

14 Struv. ubi sup.—Cuspin. *Vit. Hen. VII.*

15 Cuspin. *Vit. Hen. VII.*

making these acquisitions in Europe, it lost all its possessions in Asia [16].

The affairs of France now claim our attention.

16 Petit de Duisburgh, *Chronic. Prussiæ.*

LETTER XL.

History of France from the Death of Louis IX. till the Accession of the House of Valois.

YOU have already, my dear Philip, seen the pious Louis IX. perish on the coast of Africa, in a second expedition against the infidels. The most remarkable circumstance in the reign of his son Philip III. surnamed the Hardy, a prince of some merit, but much inferior to his father, is the interest he took in the affairs of his uncle Charles of Anjou, king of Naples and Sicily. This circumstance naturally leads us to an account of the Sicilian Vespers, and of the war between France and Arragon. A. D. 1270.

Charles, by the severity of his government, had not only rendered himself but his family odious to the Sicilians; and the insolence and debauchery of the French troops had excited an irreconcileable aversion against the whole nation. At the same time, the boundless ambition of this prince, who was actually preparing to attack the Greek emperor, Michael Palæologus, and was suspected of having an eye to the German empire, raised a general jealousy of him among his neighbours. Of that number was Pope Nicholas III., who particularly dreaded Charles's power; and, if he is not slandered by the French historians, contrived the scheme of his humiliation, though it did not take effect till after the death of his holiness. It was conducted by John di Procida, a Sicilian nobleman, who

had secretly prepared the minds of his countrymen for a revolt; and an accident gave it birth.

On the evening of Easter-day, as the French and Sicilians were going in procession to the church of Montreale, in the neighbourhood of Palermo, a bride happened to pass with her train; when one Droguet a Frenchman instantly ran to her, and began to use her in a rude manner, under pretence of searching for concealed arms. A young Sicilian, flaming with resentment, stabbed Droguet to the heart; a tumult ensued, and two hundred Frenchmen were slain on the spot. The enraged populace now ran to the city, crying aloud, "Kill the "French!"—and, without distinction of age or sex, murdered every person of that nation found in Palermo. The same fury spread itself through the whole island, and produced a general massacre. The enraged conspirators, brutally cruel, did not even spare their own relatives, but ripped up women who were pregnant by Frenchmen, and dashed the half-formed infants against the walls; while the priests, catching the general phrensy, butchered all the French penitents [1].

A. D. 1282.

Peter, king of Arragon, who had married the daughter of Mainfroy, the former usurper of Sicily, supported the Sicilians in their rebellion, and openly claimed the kingdom in right of his wife. The Sicilians received him with open arms. He was crowned at Palermo; and Charles of Anjou was obliged to abandon the island, after having besieged Messina for six weeks in vain. He had now no hopes but from France, where the nobility in general were well affected to him, and readily offered to furnish troops for his support. In this disposition they were encouraged by Philip. Pope Martin IV. was also entirely in the interest of Charles; who might probably have recovered Sicily, had he not imprudently agreed to decide the dispute with Peter by single combat.

1 Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*—Giov. Villani.—Spondan.

The king of Arragon, who had the duel very little at heart, was by that means enabled to amuse his rival, and fix his own family on the throne of Sicily, which became a separate kingdom from Naples. In the mean time, the pope excommunicated Peter, and gave his dominions to any of the younger sons of France that the king should choose to name. Philip, flattered by this proposal, declared his son Charles of Valois king of Arragon and Valentia, and count of Barcelona. He put himself at the head of a numerous army, in order to realise these honours; and he furnished, at the same time, his uncle Charles with a fleet and army for the recovery of Sicily. Splendid projects! which proved the ruin of both.

A.D. 1283.

Charles had left his son of the same name at Naples, with strict orders to incur no risque until his arrival with succours from France. But that young prince, provoked by the Arragonese fleet, sailed out with the force under his command, and was defeated and taken prisoner before his father's return; a circumstance which so much affected the king, that he is said to have strangled himself with a halter—a death sufficiently mild for such a tyrant [2].

A. D. 1284.

Meanwhile the French army under the command of Philip, had penetrated into Catalonia, and laid siege to Girona, which made a gallant defence. The king of Arragon, being in the neighbourhood with a small army, attacked a convoy going to the French camp, and received a mortal wound. Girona surrendered; and Philip having put a good garrison into it, dismissed part of his fleet, which had been principally hired from the Italian states. Roger di Loria, the Arragonese admiral, who durst not attack the French fleet while entire, burned and destroyed it when divided, seising all the money and provisions intended for the support of the army: and these losses sunk so deeply

2 Spondan.—Giannone, *Hist. di Napol.*

Oct. 5, 1285. into the mind of Philip, that he repassed the Pyrenees and died a few days after at Perpignan[3].

Philip III. was the first French monarch who granted letters of nobility, which he bestowed on Ralph the Goldsmith. In so doing, he only restored the ancient constitution of the Franks, who, being all of one blood, were esteemed equally noble, and alike capable of the highest offices. The notion of a particular and distinct noblesse took its rise towards the close of the second race, when many of the officers of the crown had usurped, and converted into hereditary dignities, the offices and jurisdictions which they received from royal favour[4].

The reign of Philip IV. surnamed the Fair, the son and successor of Philip the Hardy, forms an æra in the history of France, by the civil and political regulations to which it gave birth; the institution of the supreme tribunals, called Parliaments; and the formal admission of the commons, or third estate, into the general assemblies of the nation. How the French commons came afterwards to be excluded from these assemblies, we shall have occasion to see in the course of our narration.

The first care of Philip was to compose all differences with his neighbours, as he found his finances exhausted: and this he was enabled to effect by the mediation of Edward I. of England, against whom he afterwards ungenerously commenced hostilities, while that monarch was engaged in a war with Scotland. Philip also attempted, at the expense of much blood and treasure, to seise Flanders, when the count was an ally of the king of England. But as these wars were neither distinguished by any remarkable event, nor followed by any consequence that altered the state of either country, I shall proceed to the transactions between Philip and the see of Rome, and the extinction of the order of Knights Templars.

Pope Boniface VIII. had prohibited the clergy in gene-

3 Nang. *Chron.*

4 Henault, tome i.

ral from granting any aids or subsidies to princes without his leave. Philip IV., who was no less haughty than his holiness, and very needy, thought the clergy, as being the richest order of the state, ought to contribute to the wants of the crown, when the situation of affairs made it necessary, and without any application to Rome; he therefore encountered the pope's bull by an edict, forbidding any of the French clergy to send money abroad without the royal permission. This was the first cause of the famous quarrel between Boniface and Philip; and the insolence of a bishop of Pamiers threw things into a still greater ferment.

This man, named Bernard Saissetti, who had rebelled against the king in his diocese, was appointed by Boniface legate to the French court. An obnoxious subject thus invested with a dignity, which, according to the see of Rome, made him equal to the sovereign himself, came to Paris and braved Philip, threatening his kingdom with an interdict. A layman who had behaved in such a manner would have been punished with death; but the person of a churchman was sacred; and Philip was satisfied with delivering this incendiary into the hands of his metropolitan, the archbishop of Narbonne, not daring to treat him as a criminal.

A.D. 1303.

The pope, enraged at the confinement of his legate, issued a bull, declaring that the vicar of Christ was invested with full authority over the kings and kingdoms of the earth: and the chief French ecclesiastics received, at the same time, an order from his holiness to repair to Rome. A French archdeacon carried this bull and these orders to the king; commanding him, under pain of excommunication, to acknowledge the pope as his temporal sovereign. This insolence was answered with a moderation little suited to the character of Philip. He contented himself with ordering the pope's bull to be thrown into the fire, and prohibiting the departure of the bishops from

the kingdom. Forty of them, however, with many of the heads of religious orders, went to Rome, notwithstanding the king's prohibition. For this trespass he seised all their temporalities.

While Boniface and his council were considering the conduct of Philip, and by means of his confessor brought his most secret thoughts under review, that politic prince assembled the states of his kingdom. They acknowledged his independent right to the sovereignty of France, and disavowed the pope's claim. It was on this occasion that the representatives of cities were first regularly summoned to the national assembly [5].

Philip was now at full liberty to treat the pope as an open enemy. He accordingly leagued with the family of Colonna, and sent William de Nogaret, a celebrated lawyer, into Italy, with a sum of money, in order to raise troops. A body of desperadoes were suddenly and secretly collected, with which William and Sciarra Colonna surprised Boniface at Anagni, a town in his own territories, and the place of his birth, exclaiming, "Let the "pope die! and long live the king of France!" Boniface, however, did not lose his courage. He dressed himself in his cope; put the tiara upon his head; and, holding the keys in one hand and the cross in the other, presented himself with an air of majesty before his conquerors. On this occasion, it is said, Sciarra had the brutality to strike him, crying out, "Tyrant! renounce the pontificate, "which thou hast dishonoured."—"I am pope," replied Boniface with a look of intrepidity, "and I will die pope!" This gallant behaviour had such an effect on the minds of the inhabitants, that they rose against his enemies, and rescued him from their hands. But Boniface was so much affected by the indignities which had been offered him, that he did not long survive [6].

The next pope, Benedict XI., was a mild and good

5 Herault, ubi sup.—Du Chesne.—Polyd. Virg.

6 A. Baillet, *Hist. des Demelez de Boniface VIII. avec Philippe le Bel.*

man; and, being desirous of using his power for the promotion of peace, he revoked the sentence of excommunication which his predecessor had fulminated against Philip the Fair. He also pardoned the Colonnas, and showed a great disposition to reform that corruption which had spread itself through the dominions of the church. But these proceedings excited the hatred of his licentious and vindictive countrymen, who suddenly took him off by poison. He was succeeded by Clement V., who being a Frenchman, and entirely in the interest A. D. 1305. of Philip, fixed his residence in France. By means of this pope the French monarch united the city of Lyons to his kingdom; but although this was considered as a valuable acquisition, he had occasion for the assistance of Clement in an affair that lay nearer his heart. I allude to the suppression of the order of Knights Templars. That religious and military order, which took its rise, as has been already observed, during the first fervour of the crusades, had made rapid advances in credit and authority; and had acquired, from the piety of the faithful, ample possessions in every Christian country, but more especially in France. The great riches of those knights, and other concurring causes, had however relaxed the severity of their discipline. Convinced by experience, by fatigues, and by dangers, of the folly of their fruitless expeditions into Asia, they chose rather to enjoy in ease their opulent fortunes in Europe; and being all men of respectable families, they scorned the ignoble occupations of a monastic life, and passed their time wholly in the fashionable amusements of hunting, gallantry, and the pleasures of the table. By these means the Templars had in a great measure lost that popularity which first raised them to honour and distinction. But the immediate cause of their destruction proceeded from the cruel and vindictive spirit of Philip the Fair.

The severity of the taxes, and the mal-administration of Philip and his council in regard to the coin, which they had

repeatedly altered in its value, occasioned a sedition in Paris. The Knights Templars were accused of being concerned in the tumult. They were rich, as has been observed; and Philip was no less avaricious than vindictive. He determined to involve the whole order in one undistinguished ruin; and on no better information than that of two knights condemned by their superiors to perpetual imprisonment for their vices, he ordered all the Templars in France to be commited to prison on one day, and imputed to them such enormous and absurd crimes as are sufficient of themselves to destroy all the credit of the accusation. They were charged with robbery, murder, and the most unnatural vices; and it was pretended, that every one whom they received into their order was obliged to renounce his Saviour, to spit upon the cross, and to join to this impiety the superstition of worshipping a gilded head, which was secretly kept at one of their houses at Marseilles. The novice was also said to be initiated by many infamous rites, which could serve no other purpose than to degrade the order in his eyes: and, as Voltaire justly observes, it shows a very imperfect knowledge of mankind, to suppose there can be any societies that support themselves by the badness of their morals, or who make a law to enforce the practice of impudence and obscenity. Every society endeavours to render itself respectable to those who are desirous of becoming members of it.

Absurd, however, as these accusations appear, above one hundred knights were put to the rack, in order to extort from them a confession of their guilt. The more obstinate perished in the hands of their tormenters. Several, in the violence of their agonies, acknowledged whatever was desired of them. Forged confessions were imputed to others; A.D. 1311. and Philip, as if their guilt had now been certain, proceeded to a confiscation of all their treasures. But no sooner were these unhappy men relieved from their tortures than they disavowed their forced confessions, exclaimed against the forgeries, justified the innocence of their

order, and appealed to the many gallant actions performed by them as a full apology for their conduct.

Enraged at this disappointment, and thinking himself bound in honour to proceed to extremities, Philip ordered fifty-four Templars, whom he branded as relapsed heretics, to perish by the punishment of fire in his capital. Great numbers expired, after a like manner, in different parts of the kingdom: and when the tyrant found that the perseverance of those unhappy victims, in justifying to the last their innocence, had made deep impression on the minds of the people, he endeavoured to overcome the constancy of the Templars by new inhumanities. John de Molay, the grand-master of the order, and another great officer, brother to the sovereign of Dauphiné, were conducted to a scaffold, erected before the church of Nôtre-Dame at Paris. A full pardon was offered them on one hand; a fire destined for their execution was shown them on the other. But these gallant noblemen persisted in the protestation of their own innocence and that of their order; and, as the reward of their fortitude, they were instantly hurried into the flames by the public executioner[7]. A.D. 1312.

In all this barbarous injustice, Clement V. fully concurred; and, by the plenitude of his apostolic power, in a general council at Vienne, without examining a single witness, or making any inquiry into the truth of facts, he abolished the whole order. The Templars all over Europe were thrown into prison; their conduct underwent a strict scrutiny, and the power of their enemies still pursued and oppressed them. But no where, except in France, were the smallest traces of their guilt pretended to be found. Some countries sent ample testimony of their piety and morals: but, as the order was now annihilated, their lands in France, Italy, England, and Ger-

7 Puteau, *Hist. de la Condamnat. des Templiers.*—Nic. Gartler. *Hist. Templar.*—Steph. Baluz. *Vit. Pontif. Avenion.*

many, were given to the Knights Hospitalers. In Spain, they were given to the knights of Calatrava, an order established to combat the Moors[8].

Philip, soon after the suppression of this order, revived his quarrel with the count of Flanders, whose dominions he again unsuccessfully attempted to unite to the crown of France. The failure of that project, together with some domestic misfortunes, threw him into a languishing consumption, which carried him off in the thirtieth year of his reign, and the forty-seventh of his age. He was certainly a prince of great talents; and, notwithstanding his vices, France ought to reverence his memory. By fixing the parliaments, or supreme courts of judicature, he secured the ready execution of justice to all his subjects; and, though his motive for admitting the third estate into the national council might not be the most generous, he by that measure put it in the power of the French nation to have established a free government.

Nov. 29, 1314.

Louis X., surnamed Hutin or the Wrangler, the son and successor of Philip the Fair, began his reign with an act of injustice. At the instigation of his uncle, the count of Valois, he caused his prime minister Marigni to be executed, on account of many pretended crimes, and magic among the rest; but in reality on account of his supposed riches, which were confiscated to the crown. But the acquisition of the effects of Marigni and his reputed accomplices not being sufficient for the king's wants, he extorted money from the nobility, under various pretences: he levied a tenth upon the clergy: he sold enfranchisements to the slaves employed in cultivating the royal domains; and when they would not purchase their freedom, he declared them free, and levied the money by force[9]! He died, like his father, after an unsuccessful attempt upon Flanders.

A.D. 1315.

June 8, 1316.

8 Id. ibid.—Rymer, vol. iii. Vertot, *Hist. des Chev. de Malthe*, tome ii.
9 Le Gendre.—Dupleix.

On the death of Louis X., a violent dispute arose in regard to the succession. The king had one daughter by his first wife Margaret of Burgundy, and left his queen, Clemence of Hungary, pregnant. Clemence was brought to bed of a son, who lived only eight days. It had long been a prevailing opinion, that the crown of France could never descend to a female; and as nations, in accounting for principles which they regard as fundamental, and as peculiar to themselves, are fond of grounding them on primary laws rather than on blind custom, it had been usual to derive this maxim (though, according to the best antiquaries falsely) from a clause in the Salian Code, the body of laws of an ancient tribe among the Franks. In consequence of this opinion, and precedents founded on it, Philip V., surnamed the Long, brother to Louis X., was proclaimed king; and as the duke of Burgundy made some opposition, and asserted the right of his niece, the states of the kingdom, by a solemn and deliberate decree, excluded her, and declared all females for ever incapable of succeeding to the crown of France[10]. A.D. 1317. The wisdom of this decree is too evident to need being pointed out. It not only prevents those evils which necessarily proceed from female caprices and tender partialities, so apt to make a minister from love and degrade him from whim, but is attended with this peculiar advantage, that a foreigner can never become sovereign of France by marriage; a circumstance always dangerous, and often productive of the most fatal revolutions.

The reigns of Philip the Long and his brother Charles the Fair, were short; nor did any memorable event occur under the sway of either. Charles left only one daughter, and consequently no heir to the crown; but, as his queen was pregnant, Philip de Valois, the next male heir, was appointed regent, with a declared right A.D. 1328. of succession, if the issue should prove female.

10 Mezeray.—Du Tillet.—Henault.

The queen of France was delivered of a daughter: the regency ended; and Philip de Valois ascended the throne of France.

This prince was cousin-german to the deceased king, and incontestably the nearest male-heir descended from a male: but Edward III., as we shall soon have occasion to see, asserted the superiority of his own claim. In the mean time, I must make you acquainted with the more early part of the reign of that illustrious monarch.

LETTER XLI.

Of the Affairs of England, Scotland, France, and Spain, during the Reign of Edward III.

THE reign of Edward III., my dear Philip, opens a wide field of observation, and involves whatever is great or interesting in the history of Europe during that period. But before we enter on the foreign transactions of this prince, I must inform you of the domestic; and, for this purpose, some recapitulation may be necessary.

A.D. 1327.

You have already been informed of the murder of the second Edward, by the inhuman emissaries of Roger Mortimer, the queen's gallant; and you may easily suppose that he and Isabella were then the objects of public odium. Conscious of this, they subjected to their vengeance whomsoever they feared, in order to secure their usurped power. The earl of Kent, the young king's uncle, was iniquitously condemned and executed; the earl of Lancaster was thrown into prison; and others of the nobility were prosecuted under different pretences [1].

1 W. Heming.—T. Walsingham.

These abuses could not long escape the observation of a prince of so much discernment as young Edward, nor fail to rouse his active spirit against the murderer of his father, and the dishonourer of his mother. But he was besieged in such a manner by the creatures of Mortimer, that it became necessary to conduct the project of bringing that felon to justice with as much secrecy and caution as if he had been forming a conspiracy against his sovereign. He communicated his intentions, however, to some of the nobles, who readily entered into his views; and they surprised the usurper in the castle of Nottingham, and dragged him from an apartment adjoining to that of the queen, while she, in the most pathetic manner, implored her son to spare the *gentle* Mortimer! A parliament was immediately summoned for his condemnation; and he was sentenced to die, from the supposed notoriety of his crimes, without any form of trial. He perished by the hands of the hangman, at the Elmes, near London: and the queen was confined, during life, to her house at Risings; where she languished out twenty-five years of sorrow rather than of penitence[2].

A.D. 1330.

Edward, having now taken the reins of government into his own hands, applied himself, with industry and judgement, to redress all those grievances which had either proceeded from want of authority in the crown, or the late abuses of it. He issued writs to the judges, enjoining them to administer justice, without paying any regard to the arbitrary orders of the great: and as thieves, murderers, and criminals of all descriptions, had multiplied to an enormous degree during the public convulsions, and were openly protected by the powerful barons, who made use of them against their enemies, the king began seriously to remedy the evil, after exacting from the peers a solemn promise in parliament, that they would break off

A.D. 1331.

2 Knighton.—Walsingham.

all connexion with such malefactors [3]. The ministers of justice, animated by his example, employed the utmost diligence in discovering, pursuing, and punishing criminals: and the disorder was by degrees corrected.

In proportion as the government acquired authority at home, it became formidable to the neighbouring nations; and the ambitious spirit of Edward sought and soon found an occasion of exerting itself. The wise and valiant Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, who had recovered by arms the independence of his country, and fixed it by treaty, was now dead, and had left David his son a minor, under the guardianship of Randolph earl of Murray, the companion of his victories. About this time Edward Baliol, son of John, formerly crowned king of Scotland, was discovered in a French prison by lord Beaumont, an English baron, who, in the right of his wife, claimed the earldom of Buchan in Scotland; and who, deeming Baliol a proper instrument for his purpose, procured him his liberty, and persuaded him to assert his claim to the Scottish crown.

Many other English noblemen, who had obtained estates during the subjection of Scotland, were in the same situation with Beaumont. They also saw the utility of Baliol, and began to think of recovering their possessions by arms: and they applied to Edward for his concurrence and assistance. The king was ashamed to avow their enterprise. He apprehended that violence and injustice would every where be imputed to him, if he should attack with superior force a minor king, and a brother-in-law, whose independent title had been solemnly acknowledged: but he secretly encouraged Baliol in his claim, connived at his assembling forces in the North, and gave countenance to the nobles who were disposed to join him. Near three thousand men were assembled, with whom Baliol and his adherents landed on the coast of Fife.

A. D. 1332.

Scotland was now in a very different state from that in

3 Cotton's *Abridgment*.

which it had appeared under the victorious Robert. Besides the loss of that great monarch, whose genius and authority preserved entire the whole political fabric, and maintained union among the unruly barons, lord Douglas, impatient of rest, had gone over to Spain in a crusade against the Moors, and there perished in battle. The earl of Murray, long declining through years and infirmities, had lately died, and was succeeded in the regency by Donald earl of Mar, a man much inferior in talents; so that the military spirit of the Scots, though still unbroken, was left without an able guide. Baliol had valour and activity, and his followers, being firmly united by their common object, drove back the Scots who opposed his landing. He marched into the heart of the country; and with his small party defeated an army of thirty thousand men, under the earl of Mar, of whom twelve thousand are said to have been slain [4].

Baliol, soon after this victory, made himself master of Perth, and was crowned at Scone. Scotland was thus easily conquered; but Baliol lost the kingdom by a revolution as sudden as that by which he had acquired it. His imprudence, or his necessities, prompting him to dismiss the majority of his English followers, he was unexpectedly attacked near Annan by Sir Archibald Douglas, and other chieftains of Bruce's party. He was routed: his brother John Baliol was slain; and he himself was chased into England in a miserable condition [5].

In this extremity, Baliol again had recourse to the English monarch, without whose assistance he could neither recover nor keep possession of his throne. He offered to acknowledge Edward's superiority; to renew the homage for Scotland; and to espouse the princess Jane, if the pope's consent could be obtained for dissolving her marriage with David Bruce, which was not yet consummated. Ambitious of retrieving the im- A. D. 1333.

4 Heming.—Walsingham. 5 Knight.—Buchanan.

portant superiority relinquished by Mortimer during his minority, Edward willingly accepted the offer, and put himself at the head of a powerful army, in order to reinstate Baliol in his throne. The Scots met him with an army more numerous, but less united, and worse supplied with arms and provisions. A battle was fought
July 19. at Halidown-hill, near Berwick; where about twenty thousand of the Scots fell, and the chief nobility were either killed or taken prisoners[6].

After this fatal blow, the Scottish nobles had no resource but in submission. Baliol was acknowledged king by a parliament assembled at Edinburgh; the superiority of England was again recognised; many of the Scottish barons swore fealty to Edward; who, leaving a considerable body of troops with Baliol to complete the conquest of the kingdom, returned to England with the
A. D. 1334. remainder of his army. But the English forces had no sooner retired than the Scots revolted from Baliol, and returned to their former allegiance under Bruce. Edward was again obliged to assemble an army, and to march into Scotland. The Scots, taught by ex-
A. D. 1335. perience, withdrew to their hills and fastnesses. He destroyed the houses, and ravaged the estates, of those whom he called rebels. But this severity only confirmed them in their antipathy to England and to Baliol; and being now rendered desperate, they soon re-
A. D. 1336. conquered their country from the English. Edward again made his appearance in Scotland, and with like success. He found every thing hostile in the kingdom, except the spot on which he was encamped; and although he marched uncontrolled over the low countries, the nation itself seemed farther than ever from being broken or subdued. Besides being supported by their pride or anger, passions difficult to tame, the Scots were encouraged amidst all their calamities with promises of relief

6 Mon. Malmesb.—Walsingh.

from France; and as a war was now likely to break out between that kingdom and England, they had reason to expect a division of the force which had so long harassed and oppressed them [7].

These transactions naturally bring us back to Edward's claim to the crown of France; on which depended the most memorable events, not only of this long and active reign, but of the whole English and French history, during more than a century. His pretensions were weak and ill-founded. He admitted the general principle, that females could not inherit the crown of France. But, in so doing, he only set aside his mother's right, to establish his own; for although he acknowledged females incapable of inheriting, he asserted that males descending from females were liable to no such objection, but might claim by right of propinquity. This plea, however, was not only more favourable to Charles king of Navarre, descended from a daughter of Louis X., but contrary to the established rules of succession in every European country. Edward's claim was therefore disregarded, and the title of Philip of Valois was generally acknowledged [8].

But although the youthful and ambitious mind of Edward had rashly entertained this false idea, he would not, in support of his claim, engage in immediate hostilities with so powerful a monarch as Philip VI. On the contrary, he went to Amiens, and did homage for Guienne [9]. By that compliance he indirectly acknowledged Philip's title to the crown of France. His own claim indeed was so unreasonable, and so thoroughly disavowed by the French, that to insist on it was no better than to pretend to the violent conquest of the kingdom; and it probably would not have been farther thought of, had not some incidents afterwards arisen which excited an animosity between the two kings.

7 Rymer, vol. iv.—Leland's *Collect.* vol. ii.—Heming.

8 Froissard, tome i. D'Ach. Spicileg. vol. iii.

9 Rymer, vol. iv.

Robert of Artois, a prince of great talents and credit, who had married Philip's sister, had fallen into disgrace at the court of France. His brother-in-law not only abandoned him, but prosecuted him with violence. A. D. 1337. He came over to England, and was favourably received by Edward. Now resigning himself to all the movements of rage and revenge, he endeavoured to revive in the mind of the English monarch his supposed title to the crown of France; and even flattered him, that it was not impossible for a prince of his valour and abilities to render this claim effectual. "I made Philip de Valois "king of France," added he: "and with your assistance, "I will depose him for his ingratitude [10]."

Edward was the more disposed to listen to such suggestions, as he had reason to complain of Philip's conduct with regard to Guienne, and was also displeased at the encouragement given by that prince to the Scots. Resentment gradually filled the breasts of both monarchs, and made them incapable of hearkening to any terms of accommodation. Philip thought himself bound by policy to assist the Scots; and Edward pretended that he must renounce all claim to generosity, if he should withdraw his protection from Robert of Artois. Alliances were formed on both sides, and great preparations were made for war.

On the side of England appeared the count of Hainault (the king's father-in-law), the duke of Brabant, the archbishop of Cologne, the duke of Gueldres, the marquis of Juliers, and the count of Namur. These princes could supply, either from their own states, or from the bordering countries, great numbers of warlike troops: and nothing seemed requisite to make Edward's alliance in that quarter truly formidable but the accession of Flanders, which he obtained by means somewhat extraordinary.

The Flemings, the first people in the north of Europe

10 Froissard, liv. i.—*Mem. de Robert d'Artois.*

that successfully cultivated arts and manufactures, began now to emerge from that state of vassalage, or rather slavery, into which the common people had been universally thrown by the abuses of the feudal polity; and the lower class of men among them had risen to a degree of riches unknown elsewhere to those of their station in that comparatively barbarous age. It was impossible for such men not to resent any act of tyranny; and acts of tyranny were likely to be practised by a sovereign and nobility accustomed to domineer. They had risen in tumults: they had insulted the nobles, and driven their earl into France.

In every such revolution there is some leader, to whose guidance the people blindly deliver themselves; and on his character depends the happiness or misery of those who have put themselves under his care: for every such man has it in his power to be a despot: so narrow are the boundaries between liberty and slavery. The present Flemish demagogue was James van Arteveld, a brewer of Ghent, who governed the people with a more absolute sway than had been assumed by any of their lawful sovereigns. He had placed and displaced the magistrates at pleasure. He was constantly attended by a guard, who, on the least signal from him, instantly assassinated any man that happened to fall under his displeasure. He had a multitude of spies in all the towns of Flanders; and it was immediate death to give him the smallest umbrage. This was the man to whom Edward addressed himself for bringing over the Flemings to his interest [11].

Proud of advances from so great a prince, and sensible that the Flemings were naturally inclined to maintain connexions with the English, on account of the advantages of trade, their leader embraced the cause of Edward, and invited him over to the Low Countries. The king repaired to Flanders, attended by several

A. D. 1338.

11 Froissard, liv. i.

of his nobility, and a body of English forces; but before the Flemings, who were vassals of France, would take up arms against their liege lord, Edward was obliged to assume the title of king of France, and to challenge their assistance for dethroning Philip de Valois, the usurper of his throne [12]. This step, which was taken by the advice of Arteveld, as he knew it would produce an irreconcileable breach between the two monarchs (an additional motive for joining the cause of Edward), gave rise to that animosity which the English and French nations, but more especially the former, have ever since borne against each other—an animosity which had, for some centuries, so visible an influence on all their transactions, and which still continues to inflame the heart of many an honest Englishman.

Let philosophers blame this prejudice as inconsistent with the liberality of the human mind; let moralists mourn its severity, and weak politicians lament its destructive rage. You, my dear Philip, as a lover of your country, will ever, I hope, revere a passion that has so often given victory to the arms of England, and humbled her haughty rival; which has preserved, and continues to preserve, the independence of Great Britain!

The French monarch made great preparations against the attack from the English; and his foreign alliances were both more natural and powerful than those which were formed by his antagonist. The king of Navarre, the duke of Bretagne, the count of Bar, were entirely in the interest of Philip; and, on the side of Germany, he was favoured by the king of Bohemia, the palatine of the Rhine, the dukes of Lorrain and Austria, the bishop of Liege, the counts of Deuxponts, Vaudemont, and Geneva.

A.D. 1339. A mighty army was brought into the field on

12 W. Heming.—Walsingham.—Rymer, vol. v.

each side. Conferences and mutual defiances, however, were all that the first campaign produced; and Edward, distressed for want of money, was obliged to disband his army, and return to England [13].

But this illustrious prince had too high a spirit to be discouraged by the first difficulties of an undertaking. He was anxious to retrieve his honour by more successful and more gallant enterprises; and the next season proved somewhat more fortunate. The English, under the command of Edward, gained an important advantage over the French by sea. Two hundred and thirty French ships were taken, and above twenty thousand Frenchmen were killed, with two of their admirals. The lustre of this victory increased the king's reputation among his allies, who assembled their forces with expedition, and joined the English army; and Edward marched to the frontiers of France at the head of a hundred thousand men. The French monarch had collected an army still more numerous; yet he continued to adhere to the prudent resolution he had formed of putting nothing to hazard, thus hoping to weary out the enemy. This conduct had in some measure the desired effect. Edward, fatigued with fruitless sieges, and irritated at the disagreeable prospect that lay before him, challenged Philip to decide their claims to the crown of France by single combat, by an action of one hundred against one hundred, or by a general engagement. Philip replied with his usual coolness, that it did not become a vassal to challenge his liege lord; and Edward found it necessary to conclude a truce for one year [14].

A. D. 1340.

June 24.

This truce would in all probability have been converted into a solid peace, and Edward would have dropped his claim, had not an unexpected circumstance opened to him more promising views, and given his enterprising genius

13 Froissard, ubi sup.—Walsingham.

14 R. de Avesb.—Ad. de Murim.—Froissard.

full opportunity to display itself. The count de Montfort, the heir male of Bretagne, had seised that duchy in opposition to Charles of Blois, the French king's nephew, who had married the daughter of the late duke. Sensible that he could expect no favour from Philip,

A. D. 1341.

Montfort made a voyage to England, on pretence of soliciting his claim to the earldom of Richmond, which had devolved to him by his brother's death; and then offering to do homage to Edward, as king of France, for the Breton duchy, he proposed a close alliance.

Little negotiation was necessary to conclude a treaty between two princes connected by their immediate interests. But the captivity of the count de Montfort, which happened soon after, seemed to put an end to all the advantages which might naturally have been expected from such an alliance. The affairs of Bretagne, however, were unexpectedly retrieved by Jane of Flanders, countess of Montfort, the most extraordinary woman of her time. Roused by the captivity of her husband from those domestic cares to which she had hitherto confined herself, she boldly undertook to support the fallen fortunes of her family.

A. D. 1342.

She went from place to place, encouraging the garrisons, providing them with every thing necessary for subsistence, and concerting the proper plans of defence; and after having put the whole province in a good posture, she shut herself up in Hennebonne, where she waited with impatience the arrival of those succours which Edward had promised her.

Charles of Blois, anxious to make himself master of this important fortress, and still more to get possession of the person of the countess, sat down before the place with a great army, and conducted the attack with indefatigable industry. The defence was no less vigorous. The besiegers were repulsed in every assault. Frequent sallies were made by the garrison; and the countess herself being the most forward on all occasions, every one was

ashamed not to exert himself to the utmost. The reiterated attacks of the besiegers, however, had at length made several breaches in the walls; and it was apprehended that a general assault, which was dreaded every hour, might bear down the garrison. It became necessary to treat of a capitulation; and the bishop of Laon was already engaged in a conference on that subject with Charles of Blois, when the countess, who had mounted a high tower, and was anxiously looking toward the sea for relief, descried some sails at a distance. "Behold the succours!" exclaimed she;—"the English succours!—"No capitulation." They consisted of six thousand archers, and some cavalry, under the command of sir Walter Manny, one of the bravest captains of England; and having entered the harbour, and inspired fresh courage into the garrison, immediately sallied forth, beat the besiegers from their posts, and obliged them to decamp[15].

Notwithstanding this success, the troops under sir Walter Manny were found insufficient for the support of the countess of Montfort, who was still in danger of being overpowered by numbers. Edward therefore sent over a reinforcement under Robert of Artois, and afterwards went to her assistance in person. Robert was mortally wounded in the defence of Vannes; and Edward concluded a truce of three years, on honourable terms, for himself and the countess. A.D. 1343.

This truce, however, was of much shorter duration than the terms specified in the articles, and each monarch endeavoured to throw on the other the blame of its infraction. The English parliament entered warmly into the quarrel, advised the king not to be amused by a fraudulent truce, and granted him supplies for the renewal of hostilities. The earl of Derby was sent over for the protection of Guienne, where he behaved with great gallan- A.D. 1344.

15 Froissard, liv. i.

try; and Edward invaded Normandy with an army of thirty thousand men. He took several towns, and ravaged the whole province, carrying his incursions almost to the gates of Paris. At length, Philip advanced against him at the head of about ninety thousand men; and Edward, afraid of being surrounded in the country, retreated towards Flanders[16].

A. D. 1346.

In this retreat happened the famous passage of the Somme, which was followed by the still more celebrated battle of Cressy.—When Edward approached the Somme, he found all the bridges either broken down or strongly guarded. Twelve thousand men, under the command of Godemar de Faye, were stationed on the opposite bank; and Philip was advancing on him, at the same time, from behind. In this extremity, he was informed of a place that was fordable: he hastened thither, but saw de Faye ready to obstruct his passage. A man of less resolution, or greater caution and coolness, would have hesitated: Edward deliberated not a moment, but threw himself into the river, at the head of his troops, drove the French from their station, and pursued them to a distance on the plain. Philip and his forces arrived at the ford, when the rear-guard of the English army were passing; and the rising of the tide alone prevented the incensed monarch from following them. On the lapse of so few moments depended the fate of Edward!—and these, by his celerity, were turned from ruin into victory! Yet if he had been unfortunate in his passage, or if the French army had arrived somewhat sooner, how many pretended philosophers would have told us that he was an inconsiderate prince, and the attempt would have been branded as absurd!—So much, my dear Philip, does the reputation of events depend on success, and the characters of men on the situations in which they are engaged.

Edward by his fortunate passage gained some ground of

16 R. de Avesb.—Froissard, ubi sup.

the enemy, as Philip was obliged to take his route by the bridge of Abbeville; but he still saw the danger of precipitating his march over the plains of Picardy, and of exposing his rear to the insults of the numerous cavalry, in which the French camp abounded. He therefore embraced the prudent resolution of waiting the arrival of the enemy, and chose his ground advantageously near the village of Cressy, where he drew up his army in excellent order. The first line was commanded by the prince of Wales, commonly called the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour; the second by the earls of Arundel and Northampton: and the king himself took the direction of the third. The French army, which now consisted of above a hundred thousand men, was also formed into three lines; but, as Philip had made a hasty and confused march from Abbeville, the troops were fatigued and disordered. The first line, partly consisting of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bow men, was commanded by Doria and Grimaldi; the second was led by the count d'Alençon; and the king in person was at the head of the third. The battle began about three o'clock, and continued till towards evening, when the French fled with precipitation. Almost forty thousand of their number were slain, among whom were many of the principal nobility, twelve hundred knights, and fourteen hundred gentlemen. On his return to the camp, Edward embraced and congratulated the prince of Wales, who had distinguished himself in a remarkable manner. "My brave son!" cried he, "persevere in your honourable course. You are my son; "for valiantly you have acquitted yourself to-day. You "have shown yourself worthy of empire[17]."

Aug. 26.

This victory is partly ascribed to some pieces of artillery, which Edward is said to have planted in his front, and which gave great alarm to the enemy[18]; but we cannot suppose they did much execution. The invention was

17 Froissard, liv. i.—Walsing.—Avesb. 18 Villani, lib. xii.

yet in its infancy; and cannon were at first so clumsy, and of such difficult management, that they were rather encumbrances than those terrible instruments of desolation which we now behold them. They had never before been used on any memorable occasion in Europe. This may, therefore, be regarded as the æra of one of the most important discoveries that have been made among men; a discovery which changed by degrees the whole military science, and of course many circumstances in the political government of Europe; which has brought nations more on a level; has made success in war a matter of calculation; and, though seemingly contrived for the destruction of mankind, and the overthrow of empires, has in the issue rendered battles less bloody, and conquests less frequent, by giving greater security to states, and interesting the passions of men less in the struggle for victory.

A weak mind is elate with the smallest success; a great spirit is little affected by any turn of fortune. Edward, instead of expecting that the victory of Cressy would be immediately followed by the total subjection of the disputed kingdom, seemed rather to moderate his views. He prudently limited his ambition to the conquest of Calais; by which he hoped to secure such an easy entrance into France, as might afterwards open the way to more considerable advantages. He therefore marched thither with his victorious army, and presented himself before the place.

In the mean time David Bruce, king of Scotland, who had returned from a long residence in France, was strongly solicited by his ally to invade the northern counties of England. He accordingly assembled a great army, and carried his ravages as far as Durham. He was there met by queen Philippa, at the head of a body of twelve thousand men, which she committed to the command of lord Percy. A fierce engagement ensued; and the Scots were broken and chased off the field with great slaughter.

Oct. 17.

Fifteen thousand of them were slain; and the king was taken prisoner, with many of his chief nobles[19].

As soon as Philippa had secured her royal prisoner, she crossed the sea at Dover, and was received in the English camp before Calais with all the *éclat* due to her rank, her merit, and her success. This was the age of chivalry and gallantry. Edward's courtiers excelled in these accomplishments no less than in policy and war; and the extraordinary qualities of the women of those times, the necessary consequence of respectful admiration, form the best apology for the superstitious devotion which was then paid to the softer sex. Calais was taken, after a blockade of almost twelve months. The inhabitants were expelled: and it was peopled with English subjects, and made the staple of wool, leather, tin, and lead; the four chief commodities of England, and the only ones for which there was yet any demand in foreign markets. A truce was soon afterwards concluded with France, through the mediation of the pope's legate, and Edward returned in triumph to England[20]. A. D. 1347.

Here a few observations seem necessary. The great success of Edward in his foreign wars had excited a strong emulation among the English nobility; and their animosity against France, and respect to their prince, had given a new and more useful direction to that ambition, which had so often been turned by the turbulent barons against the crown, or which discharged its fury on their fellow-subjects. This prevailing spirit was further promoted by the institution of the military order of the Garter, in emulation of some orders of knighthood, of a like nature, which had been established in different parts of Europe.—A story prevails, though not supported by ancient authority, that Edward's mistress, commonly supposed to be the countess of Salisbury, dropped her Jan. 19, 1350.

19 R. de Avesb.—Knight.—Froissard, ubi sup.

20 Knight.—Froissard.

garter at a court ball: that the king stooped, and took it up; when, observing that some of his courtiers smiled, as if they had suspected another intention, he held up the trophy, and called out, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*: "Evil to him that evil thinks."—And as every incident of gallantry in those times was magnified into a matter of importance, he instituted the order of the Garter in commemoration of this event, though not without political views, and gave those words as the motto of the order. Frivolous as such an origin may seem, it is perfectly suitable to the manners of that age; and, as a profound historian remarks, it is difficult by any other means to account either for the seemingly unmeaning terms of the motto, or the peculiar badge of the garter, which appears to have no reference to any purpose either of military use or ornament[21].

A damp, however, was suddenly thrown over the triumphant festivity of the English court, by a destructive pestilence, which about this time invaded Britain, after having desolated a great portion of the earth. It made its appearance first in the north of Asia; encircled that vast continent; visited Africa; made its progress from one end of Europe to the other; and is computed to have swept away near a third of the inhabitants in every country through which it passed. Above fifty thousand persons are said to have perished by it in London alone. This grievous calamity, more than the pacific disposition of the princes, tended to prolong the truce between England and France.

During this truce Philip de Valois died, without being
Aug. 22. able to re-establish the affairs of France, which his unsuccessful war with England had thrown into great disorder. This monarch had, during the first years of his reign, obtained the appellation of *Fortunate*, and acquired the character of *Prudent*: but he ill maintained either the one or the other; less indeed from his own

21 Hume's *Hist. of England*, chap. xv.

fault, than because he was overmatched by the superior fortune and genius of Edward. But the incidents in the reign of his son John gave the French cause to regret even the calamitous times of Philip. John was distinguished by many virtues, but particularly by a scrupulous honour and fidelity. He was not deficient in personal courage; but as he wanted that masterly prudence and foresight which his difficult situation required, his kingdom was at the same time disturbed by intestine commotions, and oppressed by foreign wars.

The principal author of these calamities was Charles king of Navarre, surnamed the Bad, and whose conduct fully entitled him to that appellation. He was descended from males of the royal blood of France. His mother was daughter of Louis X., and he had himself married a daughter of the reigning king; but these ties, which ought to have connected him with the throne, gave him only greater power to shake and overthrow it. He secretly entered into a correspondence with the king of England; and he seduced, by his address, Charles, afterwards surnamed the Wise, the eldest son of the king of France, and the first who bore the title of Dauphin, by the union of the province of Dauphiné with the dominions of the crown. The young prince, however, became sensible of the danger and folly of such connexions, and promised to make atonement for the offence by the sacrifice of his associates. In concert with his father, he accordingly invited the king of Navarre, and other noblemen of the party, to a feast at Rouen, where they were betrayed into the hands of John. Some of the most obnoxious were immediately led to execution, and the king of Navarre was thrown into prison. But this stroke of severity in the French monarch, and the treachery in the dauphin, was far from proving decisive in restoring the royal authority. Philip of Navarre, brother to Charles the Bad, and Geoffrey d'Harcourt, put all the towns and

A. D. 1355.

castles belonging to that prince in a posture of defence; and they had immediate recourse to England in this desperate extremity[22].

The truce between the two kingdoms, which had been ill observed on both sides, had now expired; so that Edward was at liberty to support the French malcontents. The war was renewed; and after a variety of fortunes, but chiefly in favour of the English, an event happened which nearly proved fatal to the French monarchy.

The prince of Wales, encouraged by the success of the first campaign, took the field with an army
A.D. 1356. of only twelve thousand men; and with that small body he ventured to penetrate into the heart of France. John, provoked at the insult offered him by this incursion, collected an army of sixty thousand combatants, and advanced by hasty marches to intercept his enemy. The prince, not aware of John's near approach, lost some days, on his march, before the castle of Remorantin, and thereby gave the French monarch an opportunity of overtaking him. The pursuers came within sight at Mau-
Sept. 19. pertuis, near Poictiers; and young Edward, sensible that his retreat was now become impracticable, prepared for battle with all the courage of a hero, and all the prudence of an experienced general. No degree of skill or courage, however, could have saved him, had the king of France known how to make use of his present advantages. John's superiority of number might have enabled him to surround the English camp, and, by intercepting all provisions, to reduce the prince to the necessity of surrendering at discretion. But the impatient ardour of the French nobility prevented this idea from striking any of the commanders; so that they immediately took measures for the assault, with full assurance of victory. But they were miserably deceived in their expectations. The English adventurers received them

22 Froissard, liv. i.

with the most heroic valour, put their army to flight, and took their king prisoner.

The black prince was reposing himself after the toils of battle, when he was informed of the fate of the French monarch. John had long refused to surrender himself to any one but his "cousin the prince of Wales." Here commences the real and unexampled heroism of young Edward—the triumph of humanity and moderation over insolence and pride, in the heart of a young warrior, elated by as extraordinary and as unexpected success as had ever crowned the arms of any commander. He came forth to meet the captive king with all the marks of regard and sympathy; administered comfort to him amidst his misfortunes; paid him the tribute of praise due to his valour; and ascribed his own victory merely to the blind chance of war, or to a superior Providence, which controls all the efforts of human force and prudence. He ordered a repast to be prepared in his tent for the royal prisoner; and he himself served at the captive's table, as if he had been one of his retinue. All his father's pretensions to the crown of France were now buried in oblivion. John in captivity received the honours of a king, which were refused to him when seated on the throne of Clovis. His misfortunes, not his right, were respected: and the French prisoners, conquered by this elevation of mind, more than by the English arms, burst into tears of admiration; which were only checked by the reflexion, that such exalted heroism in an enemy must make him doubly dangerous to the independence of their native country [23].

The prince conducted his royal prisoner to Bourdeaux; and, after concluding a truce for two years, brought him over to England. Here the king of France, besides the generous treatment which he received, had the melancholy consolation of meeting a brother in

A. D. 1357.

23 Froissard, liv. i.

affliction. The king of Scotland had remained above ten years a captive in the hands of Edward, whose superior genius and fortune had thus reduced the two neighbouring potentates, with whom he was engaged in war, to the condition of prisoners in his capital. Finding, however, that the conquest of Scotland was not promoted by the captivity of its sovereign, Edward consented to restore David to his liberty, in consideration of the payment of one hundred thousand marks[24].

The captivity of the French monarch, joined to the preceding disorders of the kingdom, had produced an almost total dissolution of civil authority, and occasioned the most horrible and destructive violences ever experienced in any age or country. The dauphin, who was in his twentieth year, had assumed the reins of government; but, although he was endowed with an excellent judgement, he possessed not experience or ability sufficient to remedy the prevailing evils. In order to obtain supplies, he assembled the states of the kingdom. But the members of that assembly, instead of supporting his administration, were themselves seised with the spirit of licentiousness: and they demanded limitations of the regal power, the punishment of past malversations, and the liberty of the king of Navarre. Marcel, chief magistrate of Paris, put himself at the head of the unruly populace; and, from the violence and temerity of his character, pushed them to commit the most criminal outrages against the royal authority. They detained the dauphin in a kind of captivity: they murdered in his presence Robert de Clermont, and John de Conflans, mareschals of France: they threatened the other ministers with the like fate; and when Charles, who had been obliged to temporise and dissemble, made his escape from their hands, they openly erected the standard of rebellion. The other cities of the kingdom, in imitation of the capi-

A. D. 1358.

24 Rymer, vol. vi.

tal, shook off the dauphin's authority, took the government into their own hands, and spread the contagion into every province. The wild state of nature seemed to be renewed in the bosom of society: every man was thrown loose and independent of his fellow-citizens.

The nobles, whose inclinations led them to adhere to the crown, and to check these tumults, had lost all their influence. The troops, who, from the want of pay, could no longer be retained in discipline, throwing off all regard to their officers, sought the means of subsistence by pillage and robbery; and, associating with them all the disorderly people, with whom that age abounded, infested every quarter of the kingdom in numerous bodies. They desolated the open country; plundered and burned the villages; and, by cutting off all means of communication or subsistence, reduced to necessity even the inhabitants of the fortified towns.

The peasants, formerly oppressed, and now left unprotected by their masters, became desperate from their present misery; and, rising in arms, carried to extremity those disorders which had arisen from the sedition of the citizens and disbanded soldiers. The gentry, hated for their tyranny, were exposed to the violence of popular rage; and, instead of meeting with the respect due to their rank, became only, on that account, the objects of more wanton insult to the mutinous rustics. They were hunted like wild beasts, and put to the sword without mercy. Their castles were consumed with fire, and levelled with the ground; while their wives and daughters were subjected to violation, and then murdered.

A body of nine thousand of these savage boors broke into Meaux, where the wife of the dauphin, the duchess of Orléans, and above three hundred other ladies, had taken shelter. The most brutal treatment and fatal consequences were apprehended by this fair and helpless company; when the count de Foix and the captal de Buche,

with the assistance of only sixty knights, animated with the true spirit of chivalry, flew to the rescue of the ladies, and beat off the brutal and rapacious peasants with great slaughter[25].

Amidst these disorders the king of Navarre made his escape from prison, and presented a dangerous leader to the furious malcontents. He revived his pretensions to the crown of France; but in all his operations he acted more like a captain of banditti than one who aspired to be the head of a regular government, and who was engaged by his station to aim at the re-establishment of order in the community. All the French, therefore, who wished to restore peace to their desolated country, turned their eyes towards the dauphin; who, though not remarkable for his military talents, daily gained by his prudence and vigilance the ascendant over his enemies. The turbulent Marcel was slain in attempting to deliver Paris to the king of Navarre. The capital immediately returned to its duty; the most considerable bodies of the mutinous peasants were dispersed, or put to the sword; some bands of military robbers underwent the same fate, and France began to re-assume the appearance of civil government[26].

Edward seemed to have an opportunity of greatly extending his conquests, during the confusion in the dauphin's affairs; but his hands were tied by the truce, and the state of the English finances made a cessation of arms necessary.

A.D. 1359. The truce, however, had no sooner expired than he again invaded France. He ravaged the country without opposition; pillaged many towns, and levied contributions upon others; but finding that his army could not subsist in a kingdom wasted by foreign and domestic ene-

A.D. 1360. mies, he prudently concluded the peace of Bretigni, which promised essential advantages to his

25 Froissard, liv. i.—St. Palaye *sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie.*

26 Froissard, ubi sup.

crown. It was stipulated, that John should pay three millions of crowns of gold for his ransom: that Edward should for ever renounce all claim to the crown of France, and to the provinces of Normandy, Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors; in exchange for which he should receive the provinces of Poictou, Saintonge, l'Agenois, Perigord, the Limosin, Quercy, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France; and that the sovereignty of these provinces, as well as of Guienne, should be vested in the crown of England without homage to France[27].

In consequence of this treaty, the king of France was restored to his liberty; but many difficulties arising with respect to the execution of some of the articles, he took the honourable resolution of coming over to England in order to adjust them. His council endeavoured to dissuade him from this design, which they represented as rash and impolitic; and insinuated, that he ought to elude as far as possible the execution of so disadvantageous a treaty. "Though justice and good faith," replied John, "were banished from the rest of the earth, they ought still "to retain their habitation in the breasts of princes!" And he accordingly came over to his former lodgings in the Savoy, where he soon after died[28].

A. D. 1363.

April 8, 1364.

John was succeeded on the French throne by his son, Charles V., a prince educated in the school of adversity, and well qualified, by his prudence and experience, to repair the losses which the kingdom had sustained from the errors of his predecessors. Contrary to the practice of all the great princes of those times, who held nothing in estimation but military courage, he seems to have laid it down as a maxim, never to appear at the head of his armies. He was the first

27 Rymer, vol. vi.

28 Froissard, ubi sup.

European monarch that showed the advantage of policy and foresight over a rash and precipitate valour.

Before Charles could think of counterbalancing so great a power as England, it was necessary for him to remedy the many disorders to which his own kingdom was exposed. He accordingly turned his arms against the king of Navarre, the great disturber of France during that age; and he defeated that prince, and reduced him to terms, by the valour and conduct of Bertrand du Guesclin, one of the most accomplished captains of those times, whom Charles had the discernment to choose as the instrument of his
A. D. 1365. victories. He also settled the affairs of Bretagne, by acknowledging the title of Montfort, and receiving homage for the duchy. But much was yet to be done.

On the conclusion of the peace of Bretigni, a multitude of adventurers, who had served in the war, refused to lay down their arms, or relinquish a course of life to which they were accustomed. They even associated themselves with the banditti, who were already inured to the habits of rapine and violence, and, under the name of *Companies* and *Companions*, became a terror to the peaceable inhabitants. Some English and Gascon gentlemen of character were not ashamed to take the command of these ruffians, whose number amounted to near forty thousand, and who bore the appearance of regular armies rather than bands of robbers[29]. As Charles was not able by force to redress so enormous a grievance, he was led by necessity, and by the turn of his character, to correct it by policy; to discover some method of discharging into foreign countries this dangerous and intestine evil. And an occasion now offered.

Alphonso XI. king of Castile, who took Algezira from the Moors, after a siege of above nineteen months, had been succeeded, in 1350, by his son Peter I. surnamed the

29 Froissard, ubi sup.

Cruel. This perfidious and profligate tyrant began his reign with the murder of his father's mistress, Leonora de Gusman: many of his nobles fell victims to his fury: he put to death his cousin, and one of his natural brothers, from groundless jealousy; and he caused his queen, Blanche de Bourbon, of the royal blood of France, to be thrown into prison, and afterwards poisoned, that he might enjoy in quiet the embraces of Mary de Padilla, of whom he was violently enamoured.

Henry, count of Trastamara, Peter's natural brother, alarmed at the fate of his family, and dreading his own, took arms against the king; but, having failed in the attempt, he fled into France, where he found the minds of men inflamed against Peter, on account of the murder of the French princess. He asked permission of Charles to enlist the *Companies* in his service, and to lead them into Castile against his brother. The French monarch, charmed with the project, employed du Guesclin in negotiating with the leaders of these banditti. The treaty was soon concluded; and du Guesclin, having completed his levies, led the army first to Avignon, where the pope then resided, and demanded, sword in hand, absolution for his ruffian soldiers, who had been excommunicated, and the sum of two hundred thousand livres for their subsistence. The first was readily promised; but some difficulty being made with respect to the second, du Guesclin replied, "My fellows, I believe, may make a shift to do without "your absolution: but the money is absolutely necessary." His holiness now extorted from the inhabitants of the city and its neighbourhood the sum of one hundred thousand livres, and offered it to Guesclin. "It is not my purpose," said that generous warrior, "to oppress the innocent people. "The pope and his cardinals can spare me double the sum "from their own pockets. I therefore insist that this "money be restored to the owners: and if they should be "defrauded of it, I will myself return from the other side

A. D. 1366.

"of the Pyrenées, and oblige you to make restitution." The pope found the necessity of submitting, and paid from his own treasury the sum demanded[30]. Thus hallowed by the blessings, and enriched by the spoils of the church, du Guesclin and his army proceeded on their expedition.

A body of experienced and hardy soldiers, conducted by so able a general, easily prevailed over the king of Castile, whose subjects were ready to join the enemy against their oppressor. Peter fled from his dominions, took shelter in Guienne, and craved the protection of the Black prince, whom the king of England had invested with the sovereignty of the ceded provinces, under the title of the principality of Aquitaine. The prince promised his assistance to the dethroned monarch; and having obtained his father's consent, he levied an army, and set out on his enterprise.

A.D. 1367.

The first loss which Henry of Trastamara suffered from the interposition of the prince of Wales was the recall of the *Companies* from his service: and so much reverence did they pay to the name of Edward, that great numbers of them immediately withdrew from Spain, and enlisted under his standard. Henry however, beloved by his new subjects, and supported by the king of Arragon, was able to meet the enemy with seventy thousand men, far beyond the number of those commanded by the Black Prince; yet du Guesclin, and all his experienced officers, advised him to delay a decisive action; so high was their opinion of the valour and conduct of the English hero!—But Henry, trusting to his numbers, ventured to give Edward battle on the banks of the Ebro, near Najara, where he was defeated with the loss of above ten thousand men, and du Guesclin and other officers of distinction became prisoners. All Castile submitted to the victor: Peter was restored to the throne; and Edward returned to Guienne with his usual glory; having not

30 *Hist. de Guesclin.*

only overcome one of the greatest generals of the age, but restrained the most blood-thirsty tyrant from executing vengeance on his prisoners[31].

But this gallant warrior had soon reason to repent of his connexions with Peter, who was so ungrateful as to refuse the stipulated pay to the English forces. Edward therefore abandoned him to his fate. As he soon renewed his tyranny over his subjects, their animosity was roused against him; and du Guesclin, having been restored to liberty, re-appeared with Henry at the head of a body of intrepid warriors. They were joined by the Spanish malcontents; and having no longer the superior genius and fortune of the Black Prince to encounter, they gained a complete victory over Peter in the neighbourhood of Toledo. The tyrant took refuge in a castle, where he was soon after besieged by the victors, and made prisoner in endeavouring to escape. He was conducted to his brother, against whom he is said to have rushed, in a transport of rage, disarmed as he was. Henry slew him with his own hand, in resentment of his cruelties; and, though a bastard, was honoured with the crown of Castile, which he transmitted to his posterity[32].

A. D. 1369.

The Black Prince had involved himself so much in debt by his Spanish expedition, that he found it necessary, on his return, to impose on his principality a new tax, which some of the nobility paid with extreme reluctance, and to which others absolutely refused to submit. They carried their complaints to the king of France, as their lord paramount; and, as the renunciations agreed to in the treaty of Bretigni had never been made, Charles seised this opportunity to renew his claim of superiority over the English provinces[33]. In this resolution he was encouraged by the declining years of king Edward, and the languishing state of his son's health: he therefore summoned the prince to

31 Froissard, liv. i. 32 Froissard, liv. i.—Mariana, lib. xvii.
33 Walsingham.—Froissard, ubi sup.

appear in his court at Paris, and justify his conduct towards his vassals. Young Edward replied, that he would come to Paris, but it should be at the head of sixty thousand men. War was renewed between France and England, and with singular reverse of fortune. The low state of the prince's health not permitting him to exert his usual activity, the French were victorious in almost every action; and when he was obliged, by his increasing A.D. 1370. infirmities, to throw up the command, and return to his native country, the affairs of the English on the continent were almost entirely ruined. They were deprived in a few years of all their ancient possessions in France, except Bourdeaux and Bayonne; and of all their conquests, except Calais[34].

These misfortunes abroad were followed by the decay of the king's authority at home. This was chiefly occasioned by his extravagant attachment to Alice Perrers, a young lady of wit and beauty, whose influence over him had given such general disgust as to become the object of parliamentary remonstrance. From the indolence naturally attendant on years and infirmities, Edward had also resigned the administration into the hands of his son, the duke of Lancaster, whose unpopular manners and proceedings weakened extremely the affections of the English to their June 8, 1376. sovereign. Meanwhile the prince of Wales died; leaving behind him a character adorned with every eminent virtue, and which would throw lustre on the most shining period of ancient or modern history. The king survived that melancholy incident only about twelve June 21, 1377. months. He expired in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his reign; one of the longest and most glorious in the English annals. His latter days were indeed somewhat obscured by the infirmities and the follies of old age; but he was no sooner dead,

34 Froissard.

than the people of England were sensible of their irreparable loss; and he is still considered as the greatest and most accomplished prince of his time.

The domestic government of Edward was even more worthy of admiration than his foreign victories. By the prudence and vigour of his administration, England enjoyed a longer time of interior peace and tranquillity than it had been blest with in any former period, or than it experienced for many ages after. He gained the affections of the great, yet curbed their licentiousness. His affable and obliging behaviour, his munificence and generosity, inclined them to submit with pleasure to his dominion: his valour and conduct contributed to render them successful in most military enterprises; and their unquiet spirits, directed against a public enemy, had no leisure to breed those private feuds to which they were naturally so much disposed. This internal tranquillity was the chief benefit that England derived from Edward's continental expeditions: and the miseries of the reign of his successor made the nation fully sensible of the value of the blessing.

But before I speak of the administration of Richard II. the unhappy son of the Black Prince, I must carry forward the affairs of the German empire. At present, however, it will be proper to observe, that the French monarch, Charles V., whose prudent conduct had acquired him the surname of *Wise*, died in the year 1380, while he was attempting to expel the English from the few places which they still retained in France, and left his kingdom to a minor son of the same name, so that England and France were now both under the government of minors; and both experienced the misfortunes of a turbulent and divided regency.

LETTER XLII.

Of the German Empire and its Dependencies, from the Election of Louis of Bavaria to the Death of Charles IV.

WE now, my dear Philip, approach that æra in the history of the German empire, when the famous constitution called the Golden Bull was established; which, among other points, settled the number and the rights of the electors, as yet uncertain, and productive of many disorders.

Henry VII., as you have already seen, strenuously laboured to recover the sovereignty of Italy; but he died before he was able to accomplish his purpose. His death was followed by an interregnum of about fourteen months, which were employed in the intrigues of Louis of Bavaria,
A. D. 1314. and of Frederic the Handsome, duke of Austria. Louis was elected by the majority of the princes; but Frederic, being chosen and supported by a faction, disputed the empire with him. A furious civil war, which long desolated both Italy and Germany, was the conse-
A. D. 1319. quence of this opposition. At last the two competitors met near Muldorff, and agreed to decide their important dispute by thirty champions, fifteen against fifteen. The champions accordingly engaged in presence of both armies, and fought with such fury, that in a short time not one of them was left alive. A general action followed, in which the Austrians were worsted. But this victory was not decisive. Frederic soon repaired his loss, and even ravaged Bavaria. The Bavarian assem-
A. D. 1322. bled a powerful army, in order to oppose his rival; and the battle of Vechivis, in which the duke of Austria was taken prisoner, fixed the imperial crown on the head of Louis V.[1]

1 Avent. *Annal. Boier.* lib. vii.

During the course of these struggles was fought, between the Swiss and Austrians, the memorable battle of Morgart; which established the liberty of Switzerland, as the victory of Marathon had formerly done that of Greece; and Attic eloquence only was wanting to render it equally famous. Sixteen hundred Swiss, from the cantons of Uri, Schwitz, and Underwald, defeated an army of twenty thousand Austrians, in passing the mountains near Morgart, in 1315, and drove them out of the country with terrible slaughter. The alliance into which these three cantons had entered for the term of ten years, was now converted into a perpetual league; and the other cantons occasionally joined in it[2].

Louis V. had no sooner humbled the duke of Austria than a new antagonist started up:—he had the pope to encounter. The reigning pontiff at that time was John XXII., who had been elected at Lyons in 1316, by the influence of Philip the Long, king of France. John was the son of a cobler, and one of those men who, raised to power by chance or merit, are haughty in proportion to the meanness of their birth. He had not hitherto, however, interfered in the affairs of the empire; but now he set himself up as its judge and master. He declared the election of Louis void: he maintained, A. D. 1324. that it was the right of the sovereign pontiff to examine and confirm the election of emperors, and that the government, during a vacancy, belonged to him; and he commanded the Bavarian, by virtue of his apostolic power, to lay aside the imperial ensigns, until he should receive permission from the holy see to reassume them[3].

Several attempts were made by Louis to soothe the pope's spirit, but in vain: the proud pontiff was inflexible, and would listen to no reasonable conditions. The emperor, therefore, jealous of the independence of his crown,

2 Simler, *de Repub. Helvetic.*

3 Steph. Baluzii *Vit. Pontif. Avenion.* vol. i.

endeavoured to strengthen his interest both in Italy and Germany. He continued the government of Milan in the family of the Visconti, who were rather masters than magistrates of that city; and he conferred the government of Lucca on Castruccio Castruccani, a celebrated captain, whose life is pompously written by Machiavel. The German princes were chiefly in his interest, and no less jealous than he of the dignity of the empire.

Enraged at such firmness, pope John excommunicated and deposed the emperor, and endeavoured to procure the election of Charles the Fair, king of France. But this attempt miscarried. None of the German princes, except Leopold of Austria, came to the place appointed for an interview with the French monarch; and the imprudent and ambitious Charles returned, chagrined and disappointed, into his own dominions[4].

A.D. 1325.

Thus freed from a dangerous rival, Louis marched into Italy, in order to establish his authority in that country. He was crowned at Milan, and afterwards at Rome; where he ordered the following proclamation to be made three times by an Augustine friar: "Is "there any one who will defend the cause of the priest "of Cahors, who calls himself pope John?"—And no person appearing, sentence was immediately pronounced against his holiness. He was declared a heretic, deprived of all his dignities, and delivered over to the secular power, in order to suffer the punishment of fire; and a Neapolitan friar was created pope under the name of Nicholas V[5].

A.D. 1327.

A.D. 1328.

But Louis, notwithstanding this mighty parade, was soon obliged, like his predecessors, to quit Italy, in order to quell the troubles of Germany; and pope John, though a refugee on the banks of the Rhone, recovered his authority in Rome. The Imperialists were expelled from the city; and the emperor's pope was car-

A.D. 1330.

4 Villani, lib. ix.

5 Baluz, ubi supra.

ried to Avignon, where, with a rope about his neck, he publicly implored forgiveness of his rival, and ended his days in a prison[6].

The emperor, in the mean time, remained in peace at Munich, having settled the affairs of Germany. But he still lay under the censures of the church, and the pope continued to solicit the princes of the empire to revolt from him. Louis was preparing to assemble a general council, in order to depose his holiness a second time, when the death of John precluded the necessity of such a measure, and relieved the emperor from all dread of the spiritual thunder. This turbulent pope, who first invented the taxes for dispensations and mortal sins, died immensely rich. He was succeeded in the papacy by Benedict XII., who seemed desirous of treading in the steps of his predecessor, and confirmed all the bulls which had been issued by John against the emperor. But Louis had now affairs of greater importance to engage his attention than those fulminations. John of Luxemburg, second son of the king of Bohemia, had married Margaret, surnamed Great-Mouth, heiress of Carinthia; and that princess accusing her husband of impotency, the bishop of Frisingen dissolved the marriage, and she espoused the margrave of Brandenburg, son of the emperor, who readily consented to a match which added Tyrol and Carinthia to the possessions of his family. This marriage produced a war between the houses of Bavaria and Bohemia, which lasted only one year, but occasioned abundance of bloodshed; and the parties came to an extraordinary accommodation. John of Luxemburg confessed that his wife had reason to forsake him, renounced all claim to her, and ratified her marriage with the margrave of Brandenburg[7].

A.D. 1334.

A.D. 1336.

This affair being settled, Louis exerted all his endeavours to appease the domestic troubles of the empire, which were still kept alive by the intrigues of the pope; and

6 Baluz. *Vit. Pontif. Avenion.*

7 *Hist. de Luxembourg.*

notwithstanding all the injuries and insults he had sustained, he made several attempts towards an accommodation with the holy see. But these negotiations being rendered ineffectual by the influence of France, the princes of the empire, ecclesiastical as well as secular,

A. D. 1338. assembled at Frankfort, and established that famous constitution, by which it was irrevocably decided, "that the imperial dignity might be conferred by a plurality of the suffrages of the electoral college, without "the consent of the holy see; that the pope had no superiority over the emperor of Germany, nor any right "to approve or reject his election; and that to maintain "the contrary was high treason." They also refuted the absurd claim of the popes to the government of the empire during a vacancy; and declared, that this right appertained, by ancient custom, to the count palatine of the Rhine.

Germany now enjoyed for some years, what it had seldom known, the blessing of peace, which was again interrupted by the court of Avignon. Benedict

A. D. 1342. XII. was succeeded in the papacy by Clement VI., a native of France, who was so haughty and enterprising as to affirm that his "predecessors did not know what it "was to be popes." He began his pontificate with renewing all the bulls issued against Louis; with naming a vicar-general of the empire in Lombardy, and endeavouring to make all Italy shake off the emperor's authority.

Louis, still desirous of an accommodation with the holy see, amidst all these acts of enmity, sent ambassadors to the court of Avignon. But the terms prescribed by the pope were so unreasonable, that they were rejected with disdain by a diet of the empire. Clement, highly incensed at this instance of disregard, fulminated new excommunications against the emperor. "May the

A. D. 1346. wrath of God," says the enraged pontiff in one of his bulls, "and of St. Peter and St. Paul, crush him

8 Heiss, liv. ii. chap. 26.

"in this world, and in that which is to come! May the "earth open and swallow him alive; may his memory "perish, and all the elements be his enemies; and may "his children fall into the hands of his adversaries, even "in the sight of their father[9]!"

Clement also issued a bull for the election of an emperor; and Charles of Luxemburg, margrave of Moravia, (afterwards known by the name of Charles IV.) son and heir of John, king of Bohemia, having made the necessary concessions to his holiness, was elected king of the Romans by a faction. Louis, however, maintained his authority till his death, which happened soon after the election of his rival; when Charles, rather by his money than his valour, secured the imperial throne. Oct. 11, 1347.

While these events occurred in Germany, a singular scene was exhibited in Italy. Nicholas Rienzi, a private citizen of Rome, but an eloquent, bold, enterprising man, and a patriot, seeing that city abandoned by the emperors and the popes, set himself up as the restorer of the Roman liberty and the Roman power. Proclaimed tribune by the people, and put in possession of the Capitol, he declared all the inhabitants of Italy free, and denizens of Rome. But these convulsive struggles of long-expiring freedom, like many others, proved ineffectual. Rienzi, who styled himself "the severe though merciful Deli-"verer of Rome, the zealous Assertor of the Liberties of "Italy, and the Lover of all Mankind," as he attempted to imitate the Gracchi, met the same fate, being murdered by the patrician faction[10].

A scene no less extraordinary was about this time exhibited at Naples. The kingdoms of Naples and Sicily still continued to be ruled by foreigners. Naples was governed by the house of France, and Sicily by that of Arragon. Robert of Anjou, son of Charles the Lame, though he had failed in his attempt to recover possession of Sicily,

9 *Annal. de l'Emp.* tome ii. 10 Id. ibid.

had rendered Naples a flourishing kingdom. He died in 1343, and left his crown to Joan his grand-daughter, who had married her cousin Andrew, brother to Louis of Anjou, king of Hungary; a match which seemed to cement the happiness and prosperity of that house, but proved the source of all its misfortunes. Andrew pretended to reign in his own right; and Joan, though but eighteen years of age, insisted that he should only be considered as the queen's husband. A Franciscan friar, called Brother Robert, by whose advice Andrew was wholly governed, lighted up the flames of hatred and discord between the royal pair; and the Hungarians, of whom Andrew's court was chiefly composed, excited the jealousy of the Neapolitans, who considered them as barbarians. It was therefore resolved in a council of the queen's favourites, that Andrew should be put to death. He was accordingly strangled in his wife's antichamber: and Joan married the prince of Tarentum, who had been publicly accused of the murder of her husband, and was well known to have been concerned in that bloody deed. How strong a presumption of her own guilt!

The king of Hungary, lamenting his brother's fate, solemnly denounced vengeance against the queen. Having repaired to Rome, he accused her, in form, before the tribune Rienzi; who, during the existence of his transitory power, beheld several kings appealing to his tribunal, as was customary in the times of the ancient republic. Rienzi, however, declined giving his decision; a moderation by which he at least gave one example of his prudence: and Louis advanced towards Naples, carrying with him a black standard, on which were painted the most striking circumstances of Andrew's murder. He ordered a prince of the blood, and one of the accomplices in the crime, to be beheaded. Joan and her husband fled into Provence; where finding herself utterly abandoned by her subjects, she visited pope Clement VI. at Avignon, a city of which she was sovereign, as countess of Provence, and which she

sold to that pontiff, together with its territories, for eighty thousand florins in gold, which, a celebrated historian tells us, were never paid. Here she pleaded her cause before the pope, and was acquitted. But perhaps the desire of possessing Avignon had some influence upon the judgement of his holiness.

Clement's kindness did not stop here. In order to engage Louis to quit Naples, he proposed that Joan should pay him a sum of money: but, as ambition or avarice had no share in the king's enterprise, he generously replied, "I am not come hither to sell my brother's blood, "but to revenge it!" and, as he had partly effected his purpose, he went away satisfied, though the kingdom of Naples was in his power[11]. Joan recovered her dominions, only to become more wretched. Of her unhappy fate I shall afterwards have occasion to speak.

A. D. 1348.

We must now return to the affairs of the emperor Charles IV. When this prince, who was equally distinguished by his weakness and pride, had settled the affairs of Germany, he went to receive the imperial crown at Rome, where he behaved in a manner more pusillanimous than any of his predecessors. The ceremony was no sooner performed than he retired without the walls, in consequence of an agreement which he had made with the pope; though the Romans came to offer him the government of their city, as his hereditary right, and entreated him to re-establish their ancient liberty. He told the deputies he would deliberate on the proposal. But, being apprehensive of some treachery, he retired in the evening, under pretence of going to take the diversion of hunting. And he afterwards ratified and confirmed many promises extorted from him by Clement VI., very much to the prejudice of the empire in Italy[12].

A. D. 1355.

The poet Petrarch, so highly celebrated for his love-

11 Giov. Villani, lib. xii.

12 Fleury, tome xx. liv. 96.

A. D. 1356. verses, wrote a letter to Charles upon this occasion, in which are found these spirited words: "You have then promised upon oath never to return to "Rome!—What shameful conduct in an emperor, to be "compelled by a priest to content himself with the bare "title of Cæsar, and to exile himself for ever from the "habitation of the Cæsars! to be crowned emperor, and "then prohibited from reigning, or acting as head of the "empire!—What an insult upon him who ought to command the universe, to be no longer master of himself, "and be subservient to his own vassal[13]?"

This emperor seemed to have entirely renounced the politics of his predecessors; for he not only discouraged and rejected the proffers of the Ghibellines, but affected to treat them as enemies to religion, and actually supported the Guelphs. By these means he procured the favour of the pope and his dependents, who flattered him with the most fulsome adulation; but the Italians, in general, viewed him with contempt, and the greatest part of the towns attached to the empire shut their gates against him. At Cremona he was obliged to wait two hours without the walls before he received the answer of the magistrates; who, at last, only permitted him to enter as a simple stranger, without arms or retinue[14].

Charles made a more respectable figure after his return to Germany. The number of electorates had been fixed since the time of Henry VII., more by custom than by laws, but not the number of electors. The duke of Bavaria presumed that he had a right to elect as well as the count Palatine, the elder branch of their family; and the younger brothers of the house of Saxony believed themselves entitled to vote as well as the elder. The emperor resolved

13 *De Vit. Solit.* lib. ii.

14 Barre, vol. ii.—Spond. *Contin.* Baron. vol. i.

to settle these points, that due subordination might take place, and future elections be conducted without confusion or disorder. For this purpose he ordered a diet to be assembled at Nuremberg, where the famous constitution called the *Golden Bull* was established, in the presence and with the consent of all the princes, bishops, abbots, and the deputies of the imperial cities.

The style of that celebrated charter partakes strongly of the spirit of the times. It begins with an apostrophe to Satan, anger, pride, luxury; and it says, that it is necessary the number of electors should be seven, in order to oppose the seven mortal sins. It speaks of the fall of the angels, of a heavenly paradise, of Pompey, and of Cæsar; and it asserts, that the government of Germany is founded on the three theological virtues, as on the Trinity. The seven electors were the archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Treves, the king of Bohemia, the count Palatine, the duke of Saxony, and the margrave of Brandenburg.

The imperial dignity, which of itself then conferred little real power, never showed more of that lustre which dazzles the eyes of the people than on the publication of this edict. The three ecclesiastical electors, all three arch-chancellors, appeared in the procession with the seals of the empire; the archbishop of Mentz carried that of Germany, the elector of Cologne that of Italy, and the archbishop of Treves that of Gaul; though the empire now possessed nothing in Gaul, except a claim to empty homage for the remains of the kingdom of Provence and the principality of Dauphiné. How little power Charles had in Italy, we have already seen. Besides granting to the pope all the lands claimed by the holy see, he left the family of Visconti in the quiet possession of Milan and the whole province of Lombardy, which they had usurped from him, and suffered the Venetians to retain Padua, Vicenza, and Verona[15]. I must now take notice of the ceremonial.

15 Barre, vol. ii.—Spond. *Contin.* Baron. vol. i.

The duke of Luxemburg and Brabant, who represented the king of Bohemia, as great cup-bearer, delivered to the emperor his drink, which was poured from a golden flagon into a cup of the same metal; the duke of Saxony, as grand marshal, appeared with a silver measure filled with oats; the elector of Brandenburg presented the emperor and empress with water to wash in a golden ewer, placed in a golden bason; and the count Palatine served up the victuals in golden dishes, in presence of all the great officers of the empire[16].

The latter part of the reign of Charles IV. was distinguished by no remarkable transaction except the sale of the imperial jurisdictions in Italy; which were alternately resumed and sold. Charles, who was reputed a
A. D. 1378. good prince, but a weak emperor, was succeeded in all his possessions and dignities by his son Wenceslaus, whom I shall afterward have occasion to mention.—We must now proceed to the affairs of England; remarking by the way, that Charles IV. was an encourager of learning, and founded the university of Prague.

16 Heiss, liv. ii. chap. 27.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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